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## Certain Matters of Importance in the Teaching of Reading

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**O**CCASIONALLY one becomes consumed with the notion that if certain matters could be thoroughly understood and put into practice in the teaching of a given field of learning, most of the difficulties confronting teachers and pupils would be miraculously obliterated. Usually these matters represent some of the favored ideas of the person who expresses them. Nevertheless, no one denies him the right to tell his story. With this privilege in mind, the writer has placed in this article a brief discussion of *nine* matters which, in his judgment, are of sufficient importance to make a difference in the effectiveness with which children are taught to read.

1. In the beginning it is imperative to understand that the fundamental measure of effectiveness in reading is the quality and the quantity of the *meaning* which the individual realizes when he comes in contact with printed symbols of ideas. Mere recognition of either the visual or the auditory symbol of a word or phrase as something that has been seen, heard, or spoken before is not reading unless that recognition is accompanied by the realization of some degree of meaning. Furthermore, when the reading of a given

printed symbol results in the realization of a small amount of meaning, or meaning that moves away from correctness of understanding, it is perfectly clear that the reading is either poor or misleading. The best reading occurs when the individual realizes *a large amount of correct meaning* as he comes in contact with a given printed symbol.

2. If the heart of all reading is the realization of meaning, then it is consequently important to understand where meaning comes from when one reads. During past years, it has been the custom to define reading of the simplest type as the getting of meaning from the printed page. No definition could be more misleading than this. One does not *get* meaning *from* the printed page. In the first place there is no meaning on the page; only the symbols of meaning are there. Furthermore, printed symbols do not *give* meaning to the reader; they act merely as "fuses" to stimulate him to *make* meaning in his mind. This he does by recalling, manipulating, and combining concepts that the printed symbols stand for. If the reader does not possess the concept or meaning that the printed symbol represents, it is utterly impossible for him to

read the symbol and achieve meaning, even though he may learn to recognize the symbol mechanically in either visual or auditory form. Thus it is clear that the real and fundamental source of meaning in reading lies in the concepts that the reader takes with him to the printed page.<sup>1</sup> It is equally clear that reading of the *simplest type* may be defined as the *making* of correct meaning under the stimulation of printed symbols.<sup>2</sup>

3. This point of view emphasizes the significance of reading readiness so far as the construction of concepts to read with is concerned. If concepts are the source of meaning in reading, it is obvious that they must be constructed before reading can be done. This is the most fundamental and most important task in the whole business of reading readiness, and by no means should it be confined to the kindergarten and the early part of the first grade. It is true that teachers at these levels should get children ready for reading. But at all other educational levels the same task must be performed by different teachers in terms of specific selections to be read. At all grade levels the teacher of reading must build concepts with which her pupils may read available materials. Likewise, the teacher of social studies, science, literature, or any content field must "look ahead" to discover what concepts must be constructed before his pupils can read with meaning the material to be placed in their hands. A large part of a reading assignment in any field should be used for the construction or clarification of the concepts to be met in the reading of a given selection. Because comprehension in reading is as specific

as it is in each particular field, such procedure is essential to good teaching. Without it, pupils and students may very easily develop into careless readers who never learn to demand meaning in their reading.

There are, of course, several procedures proposed by which concepts can be built.<sup>3</sup> Probably the most effective of these is the direct concrete experience. But a word of warning must be issued here. Because the quality of the meaning which one realizes in reading is dependent upon the character of his concepts, the concrete experiences utilized must above all develop truthful concepts. There can be no place for experiences which teach false concepts or meanings. Such activity prepares one for the realization of incorrect meaning when he comes into contact with the printed symbols of the concepts in question.

4. The idea that it is impossible for one to realize any degree of meaning in observing a printed symbol unless he has in his mind some amount of the concept or meaning represented by that symbol, does not intimate that the individual cannot develop new concepts as he reads. For years wide reading has been proposed as one way of learning to read and to gain new meanings or concepts. But there has been a considerable amount of loose thinking about this matter. Most certainly new meanings are not built merely by attempting to read a great deal of material. New concepts develop only under certain conditions. One of these conditions is the character of the material utilized by the individual. Only when a new meaning is surrounded by an *ample* supply of *very familiar* detail, needed by the reader to build the new meaning, does wide reading serve as a means of increasing real reading ability. Every teacher, regardless of his field, should understand

<sup>1</sup> This point of view is not original with the writer. The first emphatic attention was directed to it by Dr. Ernest Horn, College of Education, State University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa. A detailed and scholarly treatment of the problem is presented in his forthcoming book, *Methods of Instruction in the Social Studies*, published by Charles Scribner's Sons.

<sup>2</sup> As a matter of fact, reading of the most complex type is much more than this. See *The Teaching of Reading: A Second Report*. Thirty-Sixth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education. Public School Publishing Company, Bloomington, Illinois, 1937. Ch. II.

<sup>3</sup> See *The Teaching of Reading; A Second Report*. *Op. cit.* Ch. IX.

that the problem of providing for wide reading is very much a problem of having available much simple material which presents new meanings cloaked in sufficient familiar detail. This problem is complicated of course by the fact that, due to great individual differences in reading in a given class, material that will help one pupil is far too difficult for another.

5. Better understanding of the nature of reading vocabulary is needed. In the first place, it is clear that an individual's real reading vocabulary is composed only of those words with which he is able to make meaning when he comes in contact with their printed symbols. Some of these words will carry rather complete meaning for him; others can be used only in a meagre way. Some words will be useful in all their different meanings; others will be known in connection with only one or two of their several meanings. Most certainly no word form is part of an individual's reading vocabulary when he does not understand the particular meaning for which it stands in a given setting, even though he is able to pronounce or to recognize it visually as something he has seen before. One's real reading vocabulary is made up of the meanings which he has acquired and to which he has attached closely the appropriate printed symbols.

The reading vocabulary required of the school child at every grade level is much greater than one is commonly led to believe. People who represent the vocabulary of a given primer or first reader to be the same as the total number of different word forms presented in the book are not stating the facts of the case. A recent analysis of ten primers and ten first grade readers<sup>4</sup> shows that a total of 2412 different word forms were presented. However, these word forms were used to represent almost 4000 different

meanings, exclusive of the meanings cloaked in two or more word forms. In the case of each book analyzed, the number of different meanings involved was considerably greater than the number of different word forms included. Obviously, the real reading vocabulary required of a child for the reading of a given book is composed of the different concepts or meanings he must have in order to read that book effectively.

The problem of the development of reading vocabulary has commonly been considered as a two-fold task: (1) development of concepts or meanings, and (2) training in methods of word recognition or word analysis. Of the two, the former is by all odds the more important. The position of the latter in development of reading vocabulary is somewhat similar to the position of speed in silent reading. It has no value by itself. Although training in word recognition is indispensable in learning to read, the fact that it has value only when it is closely tied to the realization of meaning should constantly be kept in mind.

6. Considerable attention should be directed to the relation between achievement in language and achievement in reading. Available evidence points to the fact that some so-called reading difficulties may be in reality fundamental disabilities in language.<sup>5</sup> Two of the most important tasks in preparing children for beginning reading are the development of facility in oral expression in general, and also the establishment of familiarity with the spoken symbols of concepts to be met in reading. Furthermore, there should be close relation established at all grade levels between the content of various types of important oral expression and what is to be read. In addition, as Dolch has pointed out,<sup>6</sup> what is read should at

<sup>4</sup> McKee, Paul and Harrison, Lucile. *The Meaning Vocabulary of Primers and First Readers*. Unpublished Study. State College of Education, Greeley, Colorado, 1936.

<sup>5</sup> Young, W. *The Relation of Reading Comprehension and Retention to Hearing Comprehension*. Doctor's dissertation. College of Education, State University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa, 1930.

<sup>6</sup> Dolch, E. "Goals in Intermediate Reading." *Elementary School Journal*, May, 1935. Pp. 682-690.

times be discussed. Next to the development of concepts with which to read, it is probable that no task is more important to success in reading than the right sort of training in oral expression, and it seems safe to say that no school can realize obtainable efficiency in reading without the utilization of a well organized and functional course of study in language.

7. It is equally important that much attention be paid to what may be called the "thinking" side of reading. One of the most important but most neglected aspects of the teaching of reading is concerned with the reader's manipulation of the ideas he builds under the stimulation of printed symbols. This refers, of course, to the mind's handling of concepts after they are once recalled. Unfortunately, too many errors in reading are due to faulty interpretation, to faulty manipulation and combining of recalled concepts, and to the drawing of unwarranted conclusions. Indicative of the rather mechanical level of instruction in reading are the results of a recent analysis of intermediate grade readers. This analysis shows among other things that opportunities provided for really thinking about what is read are indeed ridiculously meagre.<sup>7</sup> There is good reason to think that a great deal of improvement in real reading ability cannot be made until needed development of thinking in connection with reading is definitely provided for.

8. One of the most frequent and crucial reading activities in which people engage both inside and outside the school is that in which factual material must be digested and manipulated in terms of a definite purpose. All real study by means of reading is of this type. Involved in this procedure are such fundamental activities as locating information to be read, determining the appropriateness of material

read to the problem at hand, organizing what is read into useful outlines and summaries, and the selection of items to be retained for a given purpose.

One of the most important of these reading-study abilities is the ability to determine the validity of a printed statement. At the present time most children and most adults have entirely too much faith in the printed word, and they are too much at the mercy of various types of misstatement of fact. In order to combat this condition of gullibility, at least two things should be done. First, children must be led to develop a critical attitude toward what they read whenever the reading is done for informational purposes. Second, they must be taught to employ the few technics available for checking on the validity of a printed statement. Among these technics are: (1) searching for objective data accompanying the statement; (2) cross checking a book with itself (3) cross checking the statement read with statements on the same point in other sources; (4) determining the competency of the author to make the statement; and (5) determining the recency of the statement. Fortunately, the teaching of this important ability can be initiated successfully with most children at the fourth grade level.

Recent analyses of basal readers<sup>8</sup> and social studies texts<sup>9</sup> show that very little if any attention is given to the teaching of these reading-study abilities. Consequently teachers in most schools will need to become the source of supply for adequate instruction. This is essential if schools are to entertain the slightest hope of helping to produce people who are able to secure the understanding of a problem successfully and independently through the medium of reading.

9. Evidence collected by Horn and

<sup>7</sup> White, D. *Analysis of Intermediate Grade Basal Readers*. Unpublished Master of Arts Thesis. State College of Education, Greeley, Colorado, 1936.

<sup>8</sup> White, D. *Op. cit.*  
<sup>9</sup> McKee, P. *Analysis of Problems and Exercises in Social Studies Texts*. Unpublished study. State College of Education, Greeley, Colorado, 1936.



# Simplification of Vocabulary and Comprehension in Reading

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VOCABULARY has been considered by numerous investigators as the most important structural element affecting comprehension in reading. Attention to other structural elements has centered largely upon sentence structure. Investigations have shown also that the nature of the reading material itself and the irrelevance of this material to the reader's interests, are other important factors which make a selection difficult to read. The writer, cognizant of these factors, conducted an investigation in the spring of 1936, centering the problem upon one of the structural elements, that of vocabulary, in an attempt to determine the extent to which its simplification might affect reading comprehension.

The problem of vocabulary load in this study was focused at the sixth grade level. The experiment was conducted in thirty-two elementary schools in eight city school systems in Iowa and Illinois. A total of 1,112 pupils were tested on three reading selections which had been rewritten into language purported to be less difficult. The vocabularies of these selections were kept within words of highest frequency (first 2500) as found in Thorndike's *Teacher's Word Book of Twenty Thousand Words*<sup>1</sup> and also within the words of the *Ogden Basic List*.<sup>2</sup> The test results secured by pupils reading the rewritten material were com-

pared with those obtained by pupils reading the material in the original forms.

Fifty-seven pupils from the entire group were then selected at different ability levels and were again tested by means of pictorial devices to determine concepts pupils obtained from their reading. These tests were immediately followed by personal interviews to determine further pupils' understanding of the reading material and to analyze their vocabulary difficulties.

## *Testing Procedure*

For the first step in the experiment, that of administering silent reading comprehension tests, three groups of pupils were tested on three different selections of reading material which were written in three different forms. Each group read one selection in the original form, one selection simplified according to Thorndike's word list, and one selection rewritten according to Ogden's "basic" words. A fourth group was tested by using simplified test questions to determine the influence, if any, of simplifying test items as well as the reading selections. The material used was taken from Test A—Silent Reading Comprehension of the 1936 Iowa Every-Pupil Testing Program, Grades 6-8, which comprises paragraph comprehension, organization of ideas, grasping and understanding of significant details, and comprehension of total meaning. None of the cities selected for the experiment had previously used the test.

<sup>1</sup> Edward L. Thorndike, *A Teacher's Word Book of the Twenty Thousand Words Found Most Frequently and Widely in General Reading for Children and Young People*. Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, 1932.

<sup>2</sup> C. K. Ogden, *The System of Basic English*. Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York, 1934.

In order to secure a random distribution of pupils, each group was made up of every fourth pupil in the sixth grade in each of the thirty-two elementary schools. This yielded an average of 278 pupils in each group. All tests were administered personally by the writer.

#### *Basis for Making Translations*

In translating the reading selections which were used in this study, factors, other than changes in vocabulary, were kept constant. The style and the structure of sentences were left in their original setting. Only such changes were made as were necessary for the proper composition of the material. Paraphrased reading selections were a trifle longer, as in certain instances it became necessary to use several words in making the transition from one vocabulary to the other. Care was also exercised to retain the original meaning. In order to confirm their validity, the translations were submitted to five competent authorities representing those fields of education crucial to the study.

In making translations by the use of words of highest frequency as determined by Thorndike, words outside of the first 2500 were replaced by words within the first 2500.<sup>3</sup> Names of persons and places were retained in the reading selections, as were also compounds made from within the first 2500 words which were nearly or quite self-explanatory. Rare or hard constructions as listed by Thorndike were not found in any of the reading material.<sup>4</sup> Derivatives were included under the primary form of words listed in the *Word Book*.<sup>5</sup>

Translations into the Ogden vocabu-

lary<sup>6</sup> were made according to the rules given in Ogden's *The System of Basic English*.<sup>7</sup> Proper names were retained in the translations as in the Thorndike.

Ogden's 850 basic words are made up of 600 names of things, 150 names of qualities (adjectives) and 100 operators. Of the 600 things, 400 are general and 200, picturable. Of the 150 qualities, 100 are general and 50, opposites. The opposites are formed by putting *un* or *not* before the name of the quality. Of the 100 operators, 16 are names of simple acts, *come, get, give, do, etc.* The others are the auxiliaries *may* and *will*, pronouns, names of directions such as *about, after, among*, and directions as *at, by, and in*. The verbs are largely eliminated by use of these operators. In addition to the 850 basic words, Ogden adds 150 words of science, 100 of which are general and 50, special. International terms, days of the week, months of the year, and number words are used as in standard English.

#### *Pictorial Tests and Personal Interviews*

The writer attempted to determine children's vocabulary difficulties and the concepts they obtain from their reading by using such devices as pictures, graphs, maps, and the personal interview. The 57 pupils used for this part of the study were divided into three groups, each group being tested on one of the three reading selections. They were chosen at various percentile points, the percentiles being transferred from the total scores on the reading comprehension tests previously administered. Pupils whose scores ranged from the twelfth to the ninety-ninth percentiles were then selected with approximately an equal number of slow, average, and bright pupils in each group. By this method of selection, it was possi-

<sup>3</sup> These substitutions constituted about seven per cent of the total number of words in the three reading selections. For Thorndike's scheme of modifying vocabulary, see Edward L. Thorndike, "Improving the Ability to Read," *Teachers College Record* XXXVI (October, 1934), pp. 1-19; (November, 1934), pp. 123-44; (December, 1934), pp. 229-41.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* (December, 1934), p. 232.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* (November, 1934), p. 125.

<sup>6</sup> The substitutions constituted about 23 per cent of the total number of words in the three reading selections.

<sup>7</sup> C. K. Ogden, *op. cit.* The rules are also reported in his *Basic English, The Basic Words, The Basic Dictionary*, and *The Basic Vocabulary*.

ble to obtain a better cross-section of children's concepts and vocabulary difficulties.

In the pictorial tests, pupils were asked to indicate those pictures which best represented a particular word, group of words, sentence, or thought in the reading selection. One or more pictures placed in each group was illustrative of the correct concept, whereas the others were

just read. By this method, concepts and vocabulary difficulties were disclosed which could not easily be obtained through an objective test.

### *Results on the Reading Comprehension Tests*

The purpose of the reading comprehension tests was to determine the dif-

TABLE I  
DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE ORIGINAL, THORNDIKE SIMPLIFIED, AND OGDEN SIMPLIFIED VOCABULARIES

Forms Compared	Selection 1		Selection 2		Selection 3	
	Average Score	Critical Ratio	Average Score	Critical Ratio	Average Score	Critical Ratio
Original Thorndike	9.67	.83	12.19	1.14	7.53	.54
	9.41		12.67		7.38	
Original Ogden	9.67	.09	12.19	1.73	7.53	1.20
	9.70		12.90		7.17	
Thorndike Ogden	9.41	.90	12.67	.55	7.38	.72
	9.70		12.90		7.17	
Thorndike Thorndike*	9.41	.96			7.38	.00
	9.10				7.37	
Original Thorndike*	9.67	1.83			7.53	.55
	9.10				7.37	
Ogden Ogden*			12.90	2.73		
			11.81			
Original Ogden*			12.19	.95		
			11.81			

\* Simplified test questions.

either wrong or required discrimination on the part of pupils. The maps were used principally to indicate the location of places and areas referred to in the reading selections. A bar graph was also used as an aid in determining the extent to which pupils understood the description and the comparative size of areas referred to in the article.

Immediately following the pictorial and map tests, pupils were interviewed in order to secure additional information as to their comprehension of the material

ference between pupils' ability to read simplified material and to read material in its original form.

In comparing test results, the random group technique was employed. The reliability of the obtained differences was determined by application of the Standard Error of the Difference formula:<sup>8</sup>

$$\text{S.E. Diff.} = \sqrt{\text{S.E.}_1^2 + \text{S.E.}_2^2}$$

For each comparison made, the obtained

<sup>8</sup> Henry E. Garrett, *Statistics in Psychology and Education*. Longmans, Green, and Company, 1926, p. 129.

difference was divided by the standard error of the difference to determine the critical ratio. As a ratio of three is the customary criterion of significance, interpretations of results in the investigation were made accordingly.

Five different comparisons were made on each of the three reading selections. Three of these were for the purpose of comparing results of the original material with those of the material rewritten according to the Thorndike and Ogden vocabularies respectively, and for determining the advantage, if any, of one simplified form over the other. The other two comparisons were to determine if differences might result from using simplified questions.

No significant differences were found in favor of either method of simplification over the original material other than those that would readily be accounted for by chance in the samples. Likewise, none was found in comparing one technique of simplification with the other. Of the three reading selections used, the greatest differences in favor of simplification occurred in Selection 2. The average scores obtained by using the Ogden and Thorndike vocabularies exceeded the average score of the original by differences of .71 and .48 respectively, with critical ratios of 1.73 and 1.14.<sup>9</sup> In Selection 3, the obtained differences were reversed, as the average score of the original form exceeded those of the Ogden and Thorndike by differences of .36 and .15 respectively, with critical ratios of 1.20 and .54. In Selection 1, the Ogden exceeded the original by a difference in averages of only .03, with a critical ratio of .09, whereas the original exceeded the Thorndike by a difference of .26, with a critical ratio of .83. In summary, comparisons made in the three selections show that the difference in averages of the simpli-

fied material on three of the comparisons exceeded the original by only slightly greater differences than the original exceeded the simplified in the other three comparisons.

In comparing one technique of simplification with the other, the average scores on both Selections 1 and 2 were greater on the Ogden than on the Thorndike. The differences in averages were .29 and .23, with the critical ratios .90 and .55. In Selection 3, a difference of .21 with a critical ratio of .72 was in favor of Thorndike. Differences in averages in favor of Ogden over Thorndike were therefore very slight.

Comparisons between results from the use of simplified and non-simplified test questions showed all differences in favor of the latter. However, no differences were significant. One of these differences, 1.09, approached significance, the critical ratio being 2.73.<sup>10</sup> This difference was found by comparing the obtained average of the group having used the Ogden simplified test questions with that of the group which used the original questions, each group having read the same selection simplified in the Ogden vocabulary.

#### *Meaningful Differences on Various Items*

The number of correct responses on each test item of the three exercises was tabulated according to the original and simplified forms. The number right was then transferred into percentages. As comparatively few items seemed to disclose differences in percentages of much consequence, only such items as appeared meaningful or significant were selected for further analysis. The standard error of the percentage of these items was computed by use of the formula for standard error of percentage frequency recommended by Holzinger,<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Table I.

<sup>11</sup> Karl J. Holzinger, *Statistical Methods for Students in Education*, Ginn and Company, 1926, p. 243.

<sup>9</sup> Table I.



TABLE II  
ITEMS IN WHICH GREATEST DIFFERENCES OCCURRED

Exercise	Item	Selection Used	Percentage Right	Percentage Difference from Original	Critical Ratio
1	1	S	37	—	—
		O	48	11	2.64
		T q	47	10	2.40
	8	S	58	—	—
		T q	41	-17	-4.07
	10	S	28	—	—
		O	40	12	3.00
	17	S	60	—	—
		T q	45	-15	-3.58
	23	S	37	—	—
		T q	26	-11	-2.81
2	5	O	50	15	3.62
		S	35	—	—
		O q	46	11	2.60
	6	S	52	—	—
		O q	40	-12	-2.86
	8	O	64	11	2.65
		S	53	—	—
	14	O	19	8	2.66
		S	11	—	—
	19	S	50	—	—
		T	62	12	2.87
		O q	37	-13	-3.12
	21	O	56	15	3.58
		S	41	—	—
3	1	S	19	—	—
		T q	29	10	2.78

Key: S—original selections; O—Ogden; T—Thorndike; O q—Ogden questions; T q—Thorndike questions

$$S.E.f_p = \sqrt{\frac{f_p(100 - f_p)}{N}}$$

The reliability of the obtained differences was then determined by use of the standard error of difference formula previously referred to in this article, and

significant differences were again interpreted in terms of the critical ratio. Results of the computations are reported in Table II.

Significant differences were found on only six test items, three in exercise one

(items 8, 10, and 17),<sup>12</sup> and three in exercise two (items 5, 19, and 21). The first three mentioned showed differences in percentages of —17, 12, and —15. In terms of critical ratio, the differences were —4.07 on item 8; 3.00 on item 10; and —3.58 on item 17. The three items in Selection 2 showed differences of 15, —13, and 15 respectively, with critical ratios of 3.62, —3.12 and 3.58. Several other differences might be considered meaningful, namely, a critical ratio of 2.64 on item 1 and —2.81 on item 23, both in exercise one; —2.86, 2.65, 2.66, and 2.87, on items 6, 8, 14, and 19, respectively, in exercise two; and 2.78 on item 1 in exercise three.

Vocabulary changes which might cause either significant or meaningful differences were carefully analyzed. Most of the significant differences occurred where reading material was paraphrased by using the Ogden "basic" words. Few benefits resulted from simplifying test items by use of either the Thorndike words of high frequency or the Ogden vocabulary.

#### *Results of Pictorial Tests and Personal Interviews*

Many vocabulary difficulties and numerous erroneous concepts were disclosed through the pictorial tests and personal interviews. For example, in one of the selections on forestry a concept which gave difficulty was found in the words "well cut over" in the sentence, "Over one-half of what remains was well cut over." There were two general meanings derived from these words. Over one-half of the pupils questioned interpreted them to mean cut over well or carefully. Less than one-half thought the words meant that most of the trees had been cut. The intent of the selection was to disclose the latter meaning.

<sup>12</sup> Table II.

In another instance, pupils were questioned as to the meaning of "our Government." Over one-third of the group thought of the Government as being a person, either as Uncle Sam, or as a man who rules the country, or as one who takes care of the people of the United States.

Tabulations were made to determine the levels of ability at which the vocabulary difficulties and erroneous responses occurred. It was found that a large majority of the vocabulary difficulties were among the children at, and below, the fiftieth percentile. Erroneous responses were also centered among pupils of lower abilities. The average number of erroneous responses per pupil for those below the fiftieth percentile was almost twice as great as it was for pupils above the fiftieth percentile.

#### *Summary of Findings*

The following findings were revealed through the study:

(1) Taken in their entirety, there were no statistically significant differences between comprehension of selections read in the original form and those read with reduced vocabularies.

(2) Significant and meaningful differences were found on a few single test items which indicated wherein a number of vocabulary changes either facilitated or hindered pupils' comprehension of material read.

(3) In so far as results of a few single test items disclosed, there were more significant differences found in favor of the Ogden simplification than the Thorndike. On the test as a whole, there were no significant differences in favor of either. However, the differences that did exist were greater in favor of the Ogden vocabulary, but not being significant, they were no doubt due to chance.

(4) The Ogden vocabulary, with its limited scope and its extreme limitations of verbs, revealed instances wherein sub-

# What Beginning Readers Read

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TIME WAS when the very first reading experiences of the children in our primary grades was most stilted, prosaic, and uninteresting—

Come and see  
See me  
Come and see me

Time was when educators realized the lack of interest in such materials and rapidly the pendulum swung full way to the highly imaginative, the fictional type—

Trip-trap! Trip-trap!  
Trip-trap! Trip-trap!  
"Who is there?"  
"It is I,  
Little Billy Goat Gruff."

After a period of years, educators realized that the first reading which children did was made up entirely of this highly imaginative fictional type, and that many words were used in the composition of these stories which the child did not use in life. As a result the pendulum began swinging back to a more factual content based on actual activities in which adults thought children were interested.

Time is when writers of reading series are stressing for our little folks in this beginning reading stage the informational stories most of which are bared of any imaginative appeal.

In order to determine to what extent these informative stories dominate our present day beginning readers, this study of nine basic pre-primers, primers, and first readers was made.

The following series of readers having a 1936 copyright were reviewed in this study: *Guidance in Reading Series*, *Everyday Life Series*, *Alice and Jerry Books*, *Elson Gray Readers*, *Unit Activity Readers*, *Happy Road to Reading*, *The Friendly Hour Series*, *Winston Silent Readers*, and *Child Development Readers*.

To organize such a study of content it was necessary to make subjective classifications which seemed best to fit the content of the books reviewed. In this classification a unit is considered as a complete idea or a complete experience. In some books units are only one page in length as is the case when a person, animal or object is being introduced. Again some units include from five to eight pages as those which take the characters on a short trip. Other units cover a large portion of a book in a detailed picture of a train or a continued experience on a farm.

The subjective classifications used for this study included:

- I. Introductory units. A character which may be a person, an object, an animal introduced in one or two sentences, as "I am Billy." "This is Jack's home."
- II. Activity units. The activities of children, of children's parents and relatives, of animals and of objects. Since this classification includes a great share of some readers, it seemed advisable to divide it into the following subdivisions which were most commonly represented.
  - A. Activities involving action, such as running, jumping, riding, playing house, hunting something list, playing with a doll; for example, "John is playing in the sand."

TABLE I.—DISTRIBUTION OF UNITS IN PRIMERS AND PRE-PRIMERS

	Introd.	Content Involving Activities									Literary Content			
Series	Introducing a character	Action	Making something—Home	Animals	Travel		Nature topics	Relatives	School	People who serve the community	Rhymes, poems	Versions of old classics	New stories—fiction	
					Little information	Some or much information								
Series A														
Pre-Primer	1	6					1							
Primer	5	14	7	5	4	4		1	13					
Series B														
Pre-Primer	1	2			2	2	1							
Primer			2	5	3	11	3							
Series C														
Pre-Primer I	5	5			1						1			
Pre-Primer II	2	2	1		1									
Primer	1	10		2	2	2	1						4	
Series D														
Pre-Primer I	3	5	2	1				1						
Pre-Primer II		6	2	1	1			1						
Primer	6	1	3	3	1		2			1		1	10	
Series E						detail of train								
Pre-Primer	8	1	2		1									
Primer	5	6	14	4	6	10				3			2	
Series F														
Pre-Primer	5	5	1	1										
Primer	3		1	1	2				6			1	1	
Series G														
Pre-Primer	5	4	2	1										
Primer	2	5	3	1		2	4		6				2	
Series H														
Pre-Primer	2	3	3	1	2	2	1							
Primer	3	4	3	1		2	3		4				5	
Series I														
Pre-Primer			Concept development through pictures											
Primer	1	2	8			2	1		5	1			2	

B. Activities involving the making of something, such as home activities—making a kite, cutting the grass, making cookies, writing a letter, preparing for a trip, giving a party.

C. Activities involving the actions of animals, a dog hiding from a child, a cat running up a tree, a dog running away with the character's doll.

D. Activities involving trips. Some of these trip units were brief and introduced the characters to the place visited but gave little information about it. Others provided quite a detailed analysis as may be found in some readers telling about grandmother's

farm, or about Mr. Dale's pet store. Hence two sub-divisions were made of this activity.

1. Little or no information about place visited

2. Some or much information about place visited

E. Activities introducing nature themes. These units include a small degree or a considerable degree of information. Stories of bird activities, feeding of birds, making bird baths, habits of rabbits.

F. A visit or the homecoming of a relative usually grandmother or father. Often a surprise element was introduced.

G. Activities of people who serve the com-



- munity. The postman calls for Jane's letter, Ben receives an invitation to visit at Jane's home, the milkman brings the milk.
- H. Activities dealing with the school. A class giving a play or a party. Susan's class take a trip to the farm or the radio station.
- III. The imaginative or literary unit. Three subdivisions have been made under this classification.
- A. The short rhyme or poem.
- B. A most simplified version of an old classic, usually an accumulative tale.
- C. A new story highly imaginative, fictional in nature, patterned after the old classics.

Table I shows the number of units and the distribution of these units in nine pre-

action of people—running, hiding. This type appears in seven of the pre-primers and in seven primers. (4) Home activities, the making of something, are used in six pre-primers. (5) Trips are more popular on the primer level, eight primers and four pre-primers having one or more units. (6) Detailed activities of the school appear in four primers; of the farm in five primers. (7) Community activities, transportation, health topics are not common to the beginning content of readers. (8) Introductory units are to be found in every pre-primer. (9) Both pre-

TABLE II—DISTRIBUTION OF UNITS IN FIRST READER

	Introd.	Content Involving Activities									Literary Content		
Series	Introducing a character	Action	Making something—Home	Animals	Travel		Nature topics	Relatives	People who serve community	Guessing—mostly riddles	Rhymes, Poems	Versions of old classics	New stories—fiction
					Little information	Some or much information							
Series <i>A</i>	1	8	3	3	2	5	1	2					
Series <i>B</i>	1		1	1	1	3			2				
Series <i>C</i>		7		6	1	3	1	1	4				5
Series <i>D</i>		2	1	1		2	1				3	6	16
Series <i>E</i>		3	2	2	2	4	7		4				3
Series <i>F</i>		2	2			4	2					1	2
Series <i>G</i>					2		4			2			8
Series <i>H</i>	4	7			1	2	3		4	7	2	1	7
Series <i>I</i>	2	2				8	9	2		4		2	1

primers and primers having a 1936 copyright.

The following conclusions may be deducted from Table I. (1) The content of pre-primers and primers now commonly used is composed largely of units which are of a factual, informative type. (2) Pre-primers and primers contain little imaginative material. Three of the new basic series examined contain no imaginative material. Other series tend to introduce some in primers. Three primers of the nine studied have provided four or five units of this nature. (3) The type of activity most stressed is the one involving

primers and primers show a considerable spread in types of content included, primers excelling the pre-primer to a large degree in this respect.

Table II shows the number of units and the distribution of these units in nine first readers having a 1936 copyright. This table corresponds to Table I.

The following conclusions may be deducted from Table II. (1) The majority of the first readers reviewed contain more informative than imaginative material as was found also in the study of primers in Table I. (2) There is a tendency to introduce the literary type of material in first

readers. (3) Longer units containing more detailed accounts of trips and experiences are to be found in first readers. (4) Nature themes are common to first readers. (5) Units stressing the services of people in the community are more frequently found in first readers than in primers. (6) There is only a slight attempt to introduce versions of old classics in first readers. The literary content is composed mostly of stories original with the authors, but patterned in theme after the old classics. (7) First readers, like primers, show a spread in types of content included.

This study raises the following disturbing questions in the minds of the writers.

In the pre-reading years, we tell our little folks the delightful old tales which have lived through the ages. Our lovely picture stories, which publishers are making more beautiful each day, are introduced during these years. We attempt to give these little folks an appreciation for the continuity of plot with its action, climax, and humor; a love for the "music of prose"; a delight in the harmony of "mood and rhythm"; an appreciation for all of these factors which make reading vital, interesting, and entrancing. What is happening to these necessary qualities of appreciation during the first school year when the child begins to read? They are not to be gained from the books he reads. Can we trust that the busy first grade teacher will find time to tell an abundance of the type of story which stimulates the imagination?

One glimpse at a first grade program convinces one of the great amount of time given over to reading informative material. The child reads factual material during his reading hour; he reads his chart stories in the science class and again in the social studies period—Information! Information! Information!

This type of reading in the reading hour, the science and the social studies

periods is warranted, but what time is left for the teacher to take children away from the realities of life to bask with them in the joy of rhythmic patterns in stories which fire their imagination and create a love for colorful words and expressions? It is not probable that the daily program can provide sufficiently for these listening experiences.

As satisfying as even a maximum program of story telling may be, is it not regrettable that when the child first begins to read there are so few stories of a literary nature on his reading level? Should not pre-primers and primers assume their share of responsibility in providing stories so easy in vocabulary, so simple in plot, so appealing in expression that they can be read with joy in this beginning stage of reading?

Since school libraries are a rarity and public libraries do not cater effectively to the "little beginning-reading" child, is it not true that a great majority of children in this country read only the one, two, three or more books provided by the school? Does this not doubly emphasize the need for school readers, so planned that they will contribute imaginative material as well as informative material?

Is it not true that children enjoy reading stories with a simple plot introducing an element of suspense? How eagerly the children follow the wee wee woman as she looks under the wee wee bed, under the wee wee chair, and so on until she finds Boo!

So also does a story make its appeal through the use of unique phrasing and rhythmic expression. How much more musical to the ear is the phrase "Off ran Little Red Riding Hood," than "Little Red Riding Hood ran off." How infatuated children become with strongly accented rhythmic patterns as the "trip-trap, trip-trap" of the Three Billy Goats Gruff over the bridge!

# Experimenting With a Flexible Reading Program\*

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HOW DOES it happen that I have such difficulty in finding high school and college students who can read to me intelligently? These young people have good minds, they receive good marks, yet they are so little impressed by the meaning and significance of the words they read, that frequently the thought of a passage is completely distorted." This was the comment made by a woman whose impaired eyesight forces her to hire people to read to her. There may be several good answers to this question, but it seems rather clear that the struggling attempts of hundreds of college students to get meaning from the printed page give elementary school teachers something to think about. I believe we can do more than we are doing at present to meet this criticism of the reading situation.

The experimentation described in this article represents an attempt to set up a plan which will make it possible for each case of reading maladjustment in our elementary school to have the best diagnosis and treatment that we can provide. We are quite willing to change our instructional and administrative procedures to attain this result. There is nothing very new or unusual in our project, nor is it a controlled piece of research. We are merely mobilizing all the forces at our command to make reading for each child an effective means of thinking and experiencing.

Since we began our project only in the fall of this year, we cannot predict its ultimate success at this time, but we are so encouraged by the results thus far shown that we feel justified in continuing the work. We began the experiment in the first grade; so far kindergarten and grades one through four are involved. We see no reason for stopping at the fourth grade, but we have not happened as yet to use fifth and sixth grade children in the new scheme.

Several considerations induced us to do something more drastic about our reading situation. Most crucial of all was the need to prevent the many first grade failures in reading. We follow the usual custom of taking into our first grade children who may be as young as five and one half years chronologically, but we promote them to second grade solely on an achievement basis. The result is that the first grade teacher faces a complex situation. Furthermore, we receive yearly a goodly number of transfers to our school. Although they may come with passing or better marks in reading, often they have not learned to use reading as a tool for thinking. These pupils, together with certain other retarded pupils who have been with us for a longer time, make too large a number of remedial problems each year in each grade. It is difficult for the teachers to find the time necessary to do all the special coaching required. It seemed unfair to consider these backward readers in the light of hospital cases for years at a time; it seemed that something more

\* Teachers co-operating in this experiment are Anna Nixon, Signe Sletten, Hilda Beug, Helen Narber, and Isobel Gregory Walling.

wholesome and developmental could be devised.

We began our new program after the first six weeks of school had elapsed, allowing the children ample time for adjustment to school after summer vacation. We do not consider as the experimental features of our program those usual measures which we use in every grade to keep children working at optimum efficiency; individual work and differentiated assignments will always be a part of teaching in any good school. What concerned us particularly were the cases of children whose reading abilities lagged one and two grades behind their ability to understand concepts. These children were forming the habit of gaining their information by listening to others during discussions, instead of perfecting their reading skills. Some of these poor readers had obviously not had a good foundation in the beginning reading. They seemed most concerned about their disability and seemed to feel they were missing out on many delightful experiences with books.

After listing the children who were seriously below standard in the first four grades, a careful diagnosis was made of each case. The diagnosis included a careful check on health, especially on hearing and vision; on his home situation, particularly the attitude of the family toward reading in general and toward the deficiency problem of the child; on observation of the child in the total school situation, of his social, emotional, and intellectual responses; on his achievement in several reading tests, both silent and oral; on first grade reading readiness as judged by good reading readiness tests; on his intelligence both on tests and as shown in practical situations; on his play and leisure time interests; and finally on his attitude toward his own reading problem as shown by friendly interviews during which the test results were frankly talked over.

After careful consultation on the part of the teachers and principal, each child in this group was recommended to whatever group and grade the whole diagnosis indicated he could best succeed in, and he was placed in that group for the reading skills period only. We call these children visiting readers. Usually retarded readers were placed in the grade below, but in a few cases the tests clearly indicated that certain fourth graders would profit greatly by second grade reading. These children are improving rapidly, partly because they are reading the easy third grade material which the best second grade group is using, and partly because they are going quite far back in the matter of word-analysis. Then, too, these cases will enjoy easy success for a while, and their early promotion to a third grade group soon is certain.

No child was changed to a lower grade unless he fully understood the need and advantages. All the children so far have seemed willing and happy to receive this special consideration. They understand they are changing for the reading skills work only. The periods for this work have been placed at the same time each day in each grade, making the transfer from room to room simple. The children also understand that the move need not be permanent, that there is a chance to move up whenever achievement levels of the next higher group have been reached. Children enjoy this and ask to be tested to see if they have improved. In two cases where the pupils were weak in all their work, they stayed in the lower grade after they had found they really were more at home there. One little boy said he felt so much better in the lower grade where he could keep up. He himself suggested staying there for all his work. He even offered to try to convince his mother that this was best.

Our plan includes also provision for the superior readers, whose reading



ability may be a year, or two, or three beyond their grade level. These are allowed to read with grades above them, but we are emphasizing the fact that no child will be allowed to "skip" a grade merely because his reading skills are superior. If we believe that the experiential content for a grade and the social living with children of his own maturity are valuable in development, then we cannot afford to have a child miss these experiences in science, in social studies, and in appreciation materials. He needs to think through these understandings as well as to sharpen his learning tools. In order to offer a challenge to these superior minds, we should be able to differentiate the quality of work demanded, rather than add more work on a quantitative basis.

As soon as a child is changed to another grade, the new teacher studies all the data collected for the child and sets up a program to meet his individual needs. It may be necessary to change his home regime, to buy a pair of glasses, to offer special practice in some single skill such as the blending of sounds of word-attack. In some cases children have not yet sensed that reading is a thought-getting process. These must be re-oriented to the function of reading in life.

Care in providing the right reading materials is of paramount importance, particularly when over-ageness is in the picture. A variety of interesting books on all sorts of vital informational subjects is required to meet the needs of the differing interests and reading levels. The picture constantly changes and we must have adequate materials ready to use.

It will be apparent to the reader that the psychological aspects of our program are of crucial importance in its success. There must be excellent teamwork and fine spirit among the teachers themselves. The cases are talked over as "family" problems, and no teacher refuses to interest herself in pupils that fall to her lot to help. Each

teacher rejoices in the improvement made anywhere, by any child.

The parents have co-operated wonderfully well. They are called in for conferences, at which time the test results are open for their inspection. Gradually they are realizing that with the best possible instruction and even with high ability on the part of the child, it will take some children seven years to finish kindergarten and the first six grades; it will take others eight years to cover that ground; it will take a few others as long as nine years. The terms "repeater" and "failure" we try not to use; we think more in terms of continuous progress at the best rate of learning of which the child is capable. In addition to individual conferences with parents, we intend to have some group meetings, and we also give to certain parents carefully selected readings which explain our point of view as expressed by well-known experts in the field.

The children have adapted themselves to the experiment in whole-hearted fashion. The treatment of the child as a person is of first importance. He must respect himself at every point, no matter in which group he reads. The younger children with whom a retarded child reads must be prepared to welcome the visitor. In fact the younger children seem to feel honored by the presence of the older children. In cases where we have accelerated superior readers, these bright young minds have had a salutary effect upon the children of the slower group of the next grade. Usually these superior readers are sobered by the real challenge they receive, should there be any tendency to "cockiness."

Although it is too early to make a thorough evaluation of our plan, particularly in actual reading gains made by the visiting readers, still certain statements may safely be made. First, very welcome benefits of the plan are felt in the first grade. Here we have a combination of

children who have had the training given in an excellent kindergarten and children who have never been in school and who, in many cases, come from a poor home situation. When it has been ascertained that a first grade age child cannot succeed, he is turned over to the kindergarten as a special case. Usually he has regular kindergarten work in the morning and a specialized individual program in the afternoon. At that time he is given whatever training in reading readiness seems necessary from the diagnosis made. Naturally, the kindergarten must be free in the afternoon if she is to do this important work. If well prepared, she can make a real contribution in this reading readiness work.

Thus we would name as the first good result of our plan, the relief afforded the first grade teacher. She has turned her poorest and her best over to other teachers for reading, and will therefore be able to devote all her time to those who have real hope of learning to read. Children are saved the hopelessness of failing because of reasons beyond their control or the teacher's.

Second, we are making progress in our ability to diagnose reading disabilities. This is due partly to the greater amount of helpful material now available on this subject, and to our concentration, as a group, upon the problem.

Third, the plan is furnishing excellent and constructive motivation. Indeed, the psychological effects are the most hopeful signs so far shown. Probably because the backward readers feel more secure in reading with children nearer their own ability, they are happier and show more interest in all their work. They no longer stand out as failures.

Fourth, the teachers and children have been relieved of the strain attendant upon promotion. To realize that there is no compulsion to get a weak child through, but rather to think of his development as a personality, is to reduce tension for children, for teachers, and for parents, once the benefits of a flexible scheme are understood.

Fifth, as in first grade, all grades become more homogeneous with respect to reading, since the two extremes of ability have been redistributed. This has made it possible to divide the grades, which number thirty children, into two reading groups instead of three as was necessary formerly.

Sixth, we believe we are making progress in making meaning the prime objective in our reading work, since the proof of good reading is its effectiveness in reading the material in all the subjects all day long.

Finally, there is no fatalistic attitude toward any reading problem. Appreciable improvement is being made by all the special cases. The child, as well as the teacher, is taking responsibility for this progress.

We are asked whether this flexible program is feasible in an average school situation. If there is a kindergarten, no additional teachers are required. The plan does call, however, for expert teaching ability, for teachers who are interested and skillful in diagnosis, who are willing to carry out the program patiently, and who can assume the leadership necessary to sell the idea to children and parents. Obviously, no one teacher can carry out such a plan alone. The co-operation of the whole staff and the administration is important to the success of the project.

# Psychology in the Reading Clinic

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THERE is great need for diagnostic, remedial, and preventive procedures in reading because reading difficulties cause thousands of school and life failures beyond the understanding of most of us. Marion Monroe,<sup>1</sup> Emmet Betts,<sup>2</sup> and Donald Durrell,<sup>3</sup> show that from eight to fifteen per cent of school pupils are retarded readers. Marion Monroe,<sup>4</sup> in her book *Children Who Cannot Read*, points out that about twelve per cent are distinctly so retarded. Durrell found in the intermediate grades retarded readers more often among the normal and superior groups in intelligence than among the dull. In fact, he found approximately eighty per cent of the retarded readers of his group with normal and superior intelligence. Mother McQueeney,<sup>5</sup> in a Master's investigation more easily found children with pronounced reading disabilities in the normal and superior levels of intelligence than among the dull.

Percival<sup>6</sup> states that the first grade is the grade of greatest failure, that more than thirty per cent of the failures in the cities are in this grade, and that more than ninety-nine per cent of the failures in this grade are due to reading disabilities. He

shows further that approximately ninety per cent of those failing promotion in the second grade do so because of reading disabilities; sixty-eight per cent of those failing promotion in the third grade are kept back because of reading defects; in the fourth grade of those retarded the percentage of those kept back because of reading failure is fifty-six; in the fifth grade it is forty; in the sixth it is thirty-three; and in the seventh and eighth it is twenty-five.

Thus we have evidence not only of the prevalence of deficiencies in reading but the need for remedial work in the elementary grades and an inkling of the fact that the remedial work will be often applied to the normal and superior children as well as to the dull.

In the Walsh Elementary School in Chicago in grades four to eight we find that among 376 school pupils there are 125 remedial cases with reading retardation ranging from one month to more than four years. The following are the statistics in these grades of this school:

36 (or 9.6 per cent) are retarded 2 years or more.

22 (or 5.9 per cent) are retarded from 1.5 to 2 years.

30 (or 8.0 per cent) are retarded from 1 to 1.5 years.

28 (or 7.4 per cent) are retarded from  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 year.

9 (or 2.4 per cent) are retarded from 0 to  $\frac{1}{2}$  year.

Thus we have approximately one-third of this population with a reading handicap,

<sup>1</sup> Monroe, Marion. *Children Who Cannot Read*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Illinois, 1932.

<sup>2</sup> Emmett Betts. *The Prevention and Correction of Reading Difficulties*, Row Peterson and Company, Evanston, Illinois, 1936.

<sup>3</sup> Durrell, Donald. *Reading Disability in the Intermediate Grades*. Unpublished Doctor's Dissertation, Harvard University, 1930.

<sup>4</sup> Monroe, Marion. *Op. Cit.*, p. 17.

<sup>5</sup> McQueeney, R. S. C. J., Mary. *A Comparison of Children of High and Low Intelligence Quotients in Their Reactions to Remedial Instruction in Reading*. Unpublished Master's Thesis, Loyola University, Chicago, Illinois, 1936.

<sup>6</sup> Percival, Walter P. *A Study of the Causes and Subjects of School Failure*. Unpublished Doctor's Dissertation, Teacher's College, Columbia University, New York, 1926.

and almost one-fourth of it with a serious reading retardation of one year or more.

In the work in a large city where numbers are necessarily great, diagnosis must be practical of administration, economical, and helpful to many children. A procedure which will be useful in the ordinary school room by the ordinary teacher is in need of development. In our diagnosis at the Walsh we proceed from the whole group to smaller groups, then to the individual. Analysis of the physical, intellectual, reading, interest, emotion, and maturity factors are made.

The school physician examines each child for contagion. Each teacher recommends other children for necessary further physical examinations. Here we use the telebinocular for children who seem to have eye trouble; we are asking that eye movements and fixations be carefully observed by the teacher, and that cases which are doubtful be immediately recommended for medical diagnosis and treatment.

The hearing of each child is noted by the classroom teacher. The watch test and whispering test are recommended for use. The careful observation and experienced judgment of the conscientious intelligent classroom teacher is always the first and often the only means of detecting visual and auditory defects in the ordinary school room.

The intellectual level of each child is estimated; the Kuhlmann-Anderson and Otis Intelligence tests have been given. The IQ of each child has been determined from these tests.

We have given the New Stanford Reading and the Gates Four-type Reading tests. The results of these group tests are carefully perused for each of the 125 children. The score on the New Stanford Reading Examination gives the general level of reading ability; the scores on the Gates show the level of ability and the

amount of deficiency in four types of reading: (1) to test general significance, (2) to predict outcomes, (3) to follow precise directions and (4) to note details. In addition we are giving the Gray Oral Reading Paragraphs to each retarded child because the performance on the Oral Test is usually enlightening in regard to certain types of difficulties.

As important for the purpose of remedial reading as to find the defects is to discover the interests, likes, dislikes, and desires of the children. For this purpose we have used the Witty Interest Inventory. In short, we try to find validly the leisure activities, work habits, books read, kind of reading desired, recreation, hopes, fears, favorite subjects, newspapers and magazines read, if any, and hobbies for each child.

We note the results of these examinations and interviews. We graph and record them in such a way that they are usable and we demand that they be used from day to day. We get the general level of maturation from the above results and by careful and continuous observation. From these records we begin treatment.

In cases of non-readers and greatly retarded readers a more complete diagnosis must consider the following factors: (1) the environmental history of the child; (2) his physical growth or maturation record; (3) his school and social history; (4) his intellectual level; and (5) his interests, attitudes, aptitudes, and emotional traits.

The environmental history should give evidence of the kind of home, community, parents, and companions which the child has. Play, work, study, and occupational records are vital. In difficult cases one cannot know too much. The minutest point may be the turning point.

While a physical examination is not the province of the classroom teacher,



careful observation will indicate defects and deficiencies in many phases of the physique. A classroom teacher can administer the Snellin tests, use the telebinocular, and observe eye movements. Careful consideration of the following physical factors is necessary: (1) Undernourishment, lack of food, malnutrition; (2) Lack of rest, poor health, fatigue, underweight, nervousness; (3) Defects such as adenoids, improper breathing, general debility; (4) Eye troubles, such as lack of visual acuity, double vision, faulty fusion, muscle imbalance, hyperopia and exoforia, lack of binocular vision, and astigmatism; (5) Poor hearing, defects in perception, span, and acuity; (6) Poor posture; (7) Poor teeth; (8) Lack of motor co-ordination in eyes, vocalization, and other movements; and (9) Lack of kinesthetic imagery.

The school history of the child—promotions, failures, success, study habits, lack of persistence, lack of attention, lack of interest, inability to get things done, and transfers—must be all taken into consideration.

Intellectual history and present state of maturity must be carefully diagnosed. Records of intelligence examinations, school progress, the improvement or deterioration of the apparent IQ, and the rate of growth in mental age should, if possible, be known. The psychological examinations are usually begun with group tests and are continued in severe cases with individual examinations such as the Binet Simon and with a performance test, such as the Grace Arthur. One can't expect a child with a language handicap to do justice to himself in a group examination of intelligence. Often such a child will be greatly handicapped even with the Binet. Only by means of performance can the clinician understand better the level of intelligence.

The reading record of severe cases

should be carefully studied. Reading successes and failures in the various grades should be noted. The time when deterioration began is an important factor, for it may give a clue to the kind of defect to look for.

The performance in oral reading must be observed. Phrasing, expressing the thought, voice control, reversals of words and letters, the omissions, substitutions, and insertions of words, and repetitions should be observed. Mispronunciation and poor enunciation must be taken into account.

In silent reading, skills, abilities, and defects in comprehension, organization, retention, and location must of course be tested. Vocabulary difficulties, lack of phonic ability, lack of ability in syllabication, and vowel errors must be noted. Confusions or reversals of letters, syllables, and words, tendencies to mirror-writing or reading, poor motor control in writing, inability to recall correct forms, inability to write correct forms, all must be checked.

Diagnosis may be aided considerably by the use of the reading tests mentioned and by other tests such as the Ayres Spelling, the Stanford Achievement, a writing test, supplementary tests in handedness, eyedness, and so forth.

Pedagogical factors, such as poor light, inadequate heat, poor ventilation, glazed paper, length of line, size of type, types of teaching, overemphasis on drill, lack of interest, and the interference of competing agencies must be understood.

Emotional and personality factors such as dislike for reading, fear, timidity, self consciousness, tenseness, instability must be taken into account.

So far a few suggestions for diagnosis have been made, and some correlates of disabilities in reading have been suggested. But it is the causes of disabilities which we should try by all means to dis-

cover. If the causes can be found, the defects may be cured or remedied. If they cannot be found, remediation is more or less work in the dark.

The factors which cause ineffective reading are many and varied. Among them are slow growth, arrested development, delayed maturation, shock, and accident. Such manifestations are inefficient eye movement, reversals, narrow eye span, and legasthenia (inability to derive thought or meaning from context) are correlates rather than causes of defects. Many of these disappear with maturation, physical and mental growth, and ordinary training. Reversals which appear quite often in the first grade usually disappear in the second, third, or fourth.

Some of the so-called causes of poor reading are: aniseikonia or differences in shape and size of the ocular images, which may be corrected by glasses; acquired word blindness, which according to Tinker<sup>7</sup> is caused by disease or injury; and congenital word blindness which according to Witty and Kopel<sup>8</sup> is a term "still invoked to describe or mystically to explain extreme cases of reading disability whose etiology is unknown."

Poor visual acuity, astigmatism, eye-muscle imbalance, hyperforia and exophoria, lack of auditory perception and acuity have been given as causes of poor reading, but further research upon these aspects is necessary. At least some of these qualities have been found by researchers as often among good as among poor readers.

Ranchburg<sup>9</sup> thinks that one cause of reading disability is inadequate blood and oxygen supply to certain correlation centers. Speech defects, lack of certain motor abilities, fear of being embarrassed have

been set forth as causes for reading disability.

Low intelligence has often been given as a cause of poor reading ability but further research is needed if this is to be justified generally.

Educational problems, fear, lack of ability to adjust, nervousness, and inexperience have been rightly considered as bearing upon defects in reading.

Betts<sup>10</sup> lists the following factors which affect reading, maturation, vision, hearing, kinesthesia, language, sex differences, emotional, pedagogical, psychological, and external, as important. He says "no one reading disability correlate can be expected to account for all types and degrees of difficulty."

Gates, after calling attention to the many causes of reading deficiency in individual cases such as low mentality, scholastic immaturity, and defective vision suggests one significant cause: it is "that reading comprises highly complex abilities that are not easily detected and observed." Gates'<sup>11</sup> point of view is: (1) that most difficulties are due to failures to acquire technics that might have been acquired had right guidance been given at the right time; (2) that misleading motivation is a serious handicap; (3) that various weaknesses and defects of the bodily organs and mechanisms involved in reading may prove to be handicaps, often serious ones; and (4) that certain individual physical or mental characteristics such as left-handedness or volatile personality may predispose a pupil to develop difficulty. Gates further believes that most children with Intelligence Quotients of 70 or above may be taught to read.

A summary of a few principles of diagnosis may be helpful. Analysis should reveal psychological, pedagogical, emo-

<sup>7</sup> Tinker, M. A., "Diagnostic and Remedial Reading," *Elementary School Journal*, XXXIII (December, 1932), 293-307.

<sup>8</sup> Witty, P. A. and Kopel, D., "Causation and Diagnosis of Reading Disability" *Journal of Psychology*, II (May, 1936), 161-191.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 176.

<sup>10</sup> Betts, Emmett A., *Op. Cit.*, pp. 54-57.

<sup>11</sup> Gates, A. I., *The Improvement of Reading*, Macmillan Company, New York, 1935, pp. 4-8.

tional, interest, and sociological peculiarities which affect efficiency and progress in reading. Several factors of difficulty rather than one should be expected from diagnosis. Several impeding factors usually contribute to a child's disability.

It is seldom that an extensive analysis is required for the ordinary remedial case. The classroom teacher generally can make the requisite diagnosis from the performance of the child on intelligence and reading tests and her knowledge of his interests, habits, attitudes, and defects. Non-readers and greatly retarded readers need of course a more complete diagnosis. The child should be made aware of his difficulties.

Many children in the schools are mentally too immature to begin reading and others are unable to read at the level upon which we place them. Many start poorly. Failure causes failure as success breeds success. The items of experience and physical maturation must be carefully considered for each child. Children should be tested from time to time so that the best remedial procedures can be applied when they are needed.

Analysis and diagnosis should be continuous. No matter how excellent and comprehensive the preliminary diagnosis may be, it is but a tentative concept which changes as new data are obtained, new defects uncovered, new interests revealed, and new impulses made apparent. Diagnosis is not a static thing, it is dynamic; it is not a perfect thing, it is an improving and unfolding procedure. Diagnostic procedures should be scientific, but they must be human, personal, sensible; they must ever be tentative, for interests and defects are in a sense changing from day to day.

Treatment in the reading clinic is of course a long story, but for this paper there are a few principles of guidance which may interest the reader.

1. Child interest must be utilized; interest must be developed in things of real value.

2. Time should be saved by group methods as far as possible.

3. Treatment should be given according to the needs of each child so that his defects may be remedied.

4. Reading should be prescribed according to the interests and ability of each child.

5. Following the philosophy that success is motivating, units in the beginning should be given which are not too long nor too difficult to be accomplished in one lesson.

6. The principles of pacing should be utilized. Diagnosing continuously, noting the child's defects and interests, work which keeps pace with the interest and ability should be provided.

7. Occasionally it is well to challenge a learner with interesting articles and materials just above his ability level.

8. Learners should have access to rich and varied reading materials.

9. A systematic remedial program should be planned and followed.

10. Readiness to read materials of certain difficulty must be determined.

11. Faulty practices of motivation and instruction should be eliminated.

12. The various rates of maturation in children should be recognized.

13. That each child should develop a regular rhythmic reading rate should be realized.

14. Methods of remedial reading should be adapted to the abilities of the individual child. Some children should be taught principally by the oral-phonetic method, others principally by the visual method, and still others principally by the kinesthetic method.

15. That special phonic training is necessary for some children should be understood.

# A Reading Program for Spanish-Speaking Pupils

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AND

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THERE ARE several major factors which must be considered when planning a program of reading instruction for Spanish-speaking children. The first problem grows out of the meagerness of their experience; a second pertains to the home language; and a third results from slow progress in reading achievement.<sup>1</sup>

## *The Language Program*

Meagerness of experience means not only the physical environment, but the paucity of ideas, concepts, and interests arising from low economic standards and different living conditions. For example, the people tend to congregate in small villages from which the women and children, in particular, rarely venture. This tendency is intensified by the clannishness of family groups which further limits the general exchange of ideas. Other conditioning factors are inferior health standards, lack of contact with reading material either in Spanish or English, and differing social attitudes.

The second problem is that of teaching children whose home language is not English—in this case Spanish. It follows that the instruction must be organized to give the child an extensive English background preparatory to reading. The first

duty of the school, then, becomes that of teaching an adequate English speaking vocabulary. This vocabulary consists of 500 to 700<sup>2</sup> words selected because of their function in every-day use and prominence in the beginning reading texts. These words are organized around centers of interest, such as home, toys, farm, pets, food, and cleanliness which utilize the backgrounds the child already possesses, but puts them in the English setting. These units must increase the number of experiences and enlarge the child's stock of concepts.

In teaching the vocabulary,<sup>3</sup> concrete illustrations are used. Objects and pets are brought into the classroom, and excursions made to various homes, gardens, stores, ditches, rivers, or bridges. This might suggest to some that the procedures are those of the typical kindergarten, but the important distinction is that the objective of this program is to build an adequate English-speaking vocabulary; consequently, a more formal language program is followed. To repeat, although these activities extend experience, the primary purpose is to provide functional opportunities for speaking English. These experiences serve to attach the appropriate English word to object or action, but

<sup>1</sup> *We Learn English*—A preliminary report of the achievement of Spanish-speaking pupils in New Mexico. San Jose Experimental School, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

<sup>2</sup> Tireman, L. S., Dixon, Newell, and Cornelius, Vera, "Vocabulary Acquisition of Spanish Speaking Children," *ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW*, 12: 118-119 (1935).

<sup>3</sup> Hughes, Marie M., *Teaching a Standard English Vocabulary with Initial Reading Instruction*, State Dept. of Education, Santa Fe, N.M., 1932.



further drill and practice are necessary before the child makes the word his own. While the amount of drill varies with the individual, all children must have many opportunities to hear and use these words correctly. Many teachers fail at this point. In the first place, they forget that the English-speaking child has acquired and practiced these words, along with many other words, over a period of from four to six years; or that the English-speaking child uses these words continuously. As contrasted to this, the Spanish-speaking youngster is expected to acquire these words in one year with little opportunity to use them out of school.

Space will not permit a detailed discussion of these important drill exercises. They begin with simple questions such as, "What is this?" and proceed to a more elaborate drill such as, "Tell me what you do to get ready for school." The child is required to organize his ideas into several sentences, using the English pattern of sentence construction which is sometimes quite different from the Spanish pattern. A helpful device in this connection is a special type of language seatwork. The teacher gives the oral directions which must be comprehended and followed by the child. Later, she checks the work which provides the child with an additional opportunity to practice the specific vocabulary.

In passing, it may be noted that collective nouns, abstract words, and prepositions require special techniques and more extended practice.

Another factor, which has been well demonstrated in the construction of primary reading texts, is the necessity of a maintenance program. This is ordinarily ignored in the teaching of oral English. While the drill program gives temporary mastery of the words presented during the development of a given center of interest, it will not guarantee permanent mastery, unless these words are system-

atically repeated in the ensuing lessons.

A further contribution to the language and reading preparatory program is made through literary experiences. Story telling by the teacher, retelling by pupils, dramatization, depiction in movie form, shadow shows, puppets, and story-reading by the teacher are some of the activities which fall under this heading. Dramatic technique must be used in telling the stories, if the fleeting interest of the child is to be held. Colored pictures, objects, and explanation are helpful in assisting the pupil to follow the sequence of thought and to enjoy the story. Hearing and repeating stories also helps the child to capture the rhythm and inflection of the English language pattern.

At this level, a "free activity period" for non-English speaking pupils may be debatable. While such an activity period may contribute to initiative, social development, and creativeness, the language progress may also be delayed as the children tend to talk in the mother tongue. If the teacher is alive to the individual needs of each pupil and ready to capitalize any interest that appears, this danger may be avoided. Pupils do not talk because they are told to do so; they talk only when they have something to say. Incorrect and inadequate forms of expression must be noted and plans made to remedy them in a future period. All of this means that the teacher is a very busy person!

Throughout the year, the teacher must continually check the individual acquisition of vocabulary. She begins on the first day of school when she attempts to determine the relative amount of English known by each child, and to group them accordingly. This checking continues as each unit is developed, and culminates with a systematic sampling, at the end of the year, of the total 700-word vocabulary. Since there is a great difference between the ability to comprehend what another says and the ability to express

one's own thought and ideas, it is desirable to check both comprehension and usage.

Experience seems to indicate that for a large per cent of the children it is necessary to devote an entire year's work to English language instruction before the formal reading program is initiated. But the matter should not be measured in length of time, but rather in the facility which each child demonstrates in his use of the new language.

Slow progress in achievement is another major factor in planning the reading program for Spanish-speaking children. This, of course, operates during the first year, but is more conspicuous toward the end of that period and throughout the intermediate grades.

#### *The Formal Reading Program*

During the first few weeks of the second year, the teacher should review the vocabulary already taught, and check the other factors of reading readiness which condition success in learning to read. The emphasis on language gradually shifts to emphasis on reading. From the first, the reading lessons consist of charts dictated by the children from their experience. While the teacher must allow and encourage some freedom of expression, she must become increasingly conscious of the need of developing a basic reading vocabulary. This type of dictated experience chart is continued throughout the year to develop the sentence sense, consciousness of the correct order of words in sentences, and appropriate verb forms.<sup>4</sup>

Since the essential words of the beginning texts have been used repeatedly in the dictated charts, it is possible to introduce the book within a few months. Spanish-speaking children do not differ from other groups in their range of individual aptitude for reading, but, in

general, progress is slower and more presentations of the printed word are necessary. Consequently, the teacher must possess a wide variety of devices to make this repetition interesting. In addition to the commonly accepted seatwork lessons and word study techniques, she finds it necessary to compose many simple stories which are presented in the form of charts, hectographed lessons, and library booklets.

The explanation of this greater need for drill and repetition may be due, in part, to the lack of stimulation which is normally enjoyed by an English-speaking child who sees books and magazines read in the home. The homes of most of the Spanish-speaking children are without reading materials, either in Spanish or English; so they cannot realize the pleasure which is derived from reading. This condition tends to lessen their desire to read. This is a challenge which must be accepted by the school, and the engendering of permanent purposes and interests made a major objective of the reading program.

All students of reading are familiar with the necessity of a broad reading program, but this is doubly imperative for children with a foreign background. The concepts they form of English-speaking peoples are acquired through reading about their family life, activities of their children, and the duties of the community helpers. Studies involving communication, transportation, commerce, governmental activities take pupils out of their local environment and give them insight into the larger world. Biography, science, history, and literature continue to add to their fund of ideas so that ultimately the non-English speaking child has much of the same stock of concepts as the English-speaking child. This reading program will be greatly facilitated by allowing parents as well as children to utilize the school library.

<sup>4</sup> In the second and third grades, group compositions record childrens' experience in a similar manner.

# Retardation in Reading

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APPROXIMATELY two thousand publications covering a number of areas related to reading problems have been collected in the Reading Clinic at the Oswego State Normal School. A survey of these materials clearly shows the inadequacies of our understandings as well as the complexity of the problems presented by those who are plagued with reading deficiencies. Furthermore, the many controlled and uncontrolled variables along with the number of areas investigated creates a mosaic of findings that is difficult to interpret.

The statements made herein are based on the reconstructions and summaries made by William S. Gray for the *Elementary School Journal* and recently for the *Journal of Educational Research*, by Miles Tinker for a number of periodicals, by Witty and Kopel for the *Journal of Educational Psychology*, by Joseph Jastak for the *Psychological Bulletin*, by Arthur I. Gates in his book *The Improvement of Reading*, by S. T. Orton in his recent book *Reading, Writing, and Speech Problems in Children*, by Marion Monroe in her book *Children Who Cannot Read* and by Emmett A. Betts for the *National Conference on Research in Elementary School English*, *The Journal of Exceptional Children*, and in his book, *The Prevention and Correction of Reading Difficulties*.

## Limitations of Studies

Several limitations of the many researches have been enumerated either by the investigator or the reviewer. The following are some of the limitations which appear to be worthy of consideration:

### 1. Definition of retardation in reading.

In some instances, retardation has been established solely on the basis of an achievement test in reading, while other investigators have attempted to arrive at the amount of retardation in terms of the mental capacity of each individual studied. There are further confusions in the literature because cases at different developmental levels have been studied.

2. *Variation of concepts underlying terminology.* It appears to be true that specialists in each area vary in their concepts of the terminology used by investigators in other fields. As a result, common understandings are lacking and misinterpretations are frequent. The values which will accrue from attempts to integrate research findings from each field pertinent to the problem are still to be realized.

3. *The increasing number of areas under investigation.* Among the many problems which beset one who would be a student of remedial reading are the extensiveness and possible inter-relationships of the items in question. There is adequate evidence of: (a) A need for a thorough understanding of the *pedagogy* of reading which involves a study of reading readiness at all grade levels, approaches to beginning reading, materials of reading, directed or developmental reading activities, supplementary or follow-up activities, ways and means of developing a meaningful and serviceable reading vocabulary, the survey of inter-related reading abilities, and kindred items. (b) Need for an understanding of the *psychology* of reading which in-

volves a study of the inter-relationships of language functions; the emotional well-being of the learner, which is reflected in attitudes, drives, and social behavior, and factors contributing to fundamental principles regarding learning. (c) Need for some understanding of the *physiology* of reading which includes a study of sensory and peripheral aspects of vision and audition and a survey of other factors which contribute to the physical well-being of the individual. (d) Need for an understanding of certain *external conditions* of learning which involve a study of position in classroom, lighting, heating, ventilation, and related factors.

4. *Background or preparation of investigators.* Since the formation of reading and study habits is a developmental problem in the larger sense, educators and psychologists have been quite appropriately intrigued by the reports of specialists in neurology, anatomy, and physiology. And on the other hand, these specialists have been evidencing increasing interest in the investigations of educators and psychologists. As a result, there is some evidence of "dabbling" research in specialized areas by workers who have questionable preparation for their undertakings. For example, one must only review the questionable validity of pedagogical remarks made by respected neurologists, optometrists, ophthalmologists, and psychologists, and the erratic statements of educators and psychologists regarding such items as vision, hearing, and glandular anomalies. The writer has studied the reports of educators who have learned to administer poorly certain tests of vision by doing what they called research. In view of this, it would appear only reasonable to expect each investigator to state his preparation for a given research project which he reports and so surely interprets, because the reading of

a few magazine articles does not make a specialist.

5. *Inadequacy of research techniques.* Education increases individual differences, clinic cases continue to behave like individuals, varying capacities for compensation are being discovered and re-discovered, and the research worker is harassed by the growing list of causes, symptoms, and correlates of reading disabilities which add to the variables that must be evaluated. For example, consider the wide variability in the responses of individuals regarding a change of handedness, age of beginning reading, amount of instruction required to develop ability for accurate and rapid word perception, and the amount of refractive error that can be tolerated. To delve into these problems requires an extension and refinement of present research techniques as well as a co-operative program of research. There is, in the judgment of the writer, a need for the pooling of detailed case studies in order to more surely differentiate symptoms and causes and to study retardation in reading as defective individual development rather than as a standardization of isolated mental functions.

### *Recent Findings*

Some of the recent findings which throw light on the problems of remedial cases may be summarized as follows:

Most reading difficulties can be prevented. During a two year period one of our large public school systems scaled down first grade failures from 22.1 per cent to 11.2 per cent, and the literature is overflowing with data substantiating claims that deficiencies in reading can be removed satisfactorily by systematic approaches to the problems.

Approximately 8 to 15 per cent of the school population in the intermediate grades is retarded in reading. Some one



fittingly remarked, "Primary reading is poorly taught, but, by and large, intermediate grade reading has been defaulted."

Eight to forty per cent of first grade pupils fail to be promoted. Data appear to vary according to entrance, promotion and classification policies, types of reading program, character of population, preparation of teachers and similar factors. The Minneapolis school teachers have boldly faced the facts and have initiated a program pertinent to these issues which is worthy of study.

Approximately 80 per cent of the retarded readers have normal or superior intelligence. In other words, no one intelligence level claims all retarded readers. Sixty per cent of the 1936 summer session cases in the Oswego Normal School reading clinic had I.Q.'s above 90.

Approximately 60 to 80 per cent of the retarded readers are boys. In addition to various findings that boys do not achieve as much as girls, there are some data reported in the literature to substantiate the contention that in general girls are promoted on lower levels of achievement than boys are. When certain developmental data are studied and when the content of certain beginning reading materials is viewed in the light of these data, it is not difficult to theorize, at least, on this aspect of the problem.

Although training alone cannot produce capacities which normally come with added maturity, certain types of kindergarten opportunities enhance a child's later school progress. Reading readiness is not a level of sheer physical growth but it is a composite of physical, mental, and emotional development. After all that has been written on this subject, the teacher's responsibility still looms large for the directing of preparatory experiences so that a reading readiness is developed.

Certain reading readiness tests are more reliable instruments for the prediction of reading achievement than are intelligence tests or ratings by kindergarten teachers. In order to interpret such a statement, however, it is necessary to have a quantitative and qualitative description of the type of beginning reading program for which readiness is predicted.

Basal age may be a more reliable criterion for the prediction of reading achievement than mental age. Several investigators have reported that a mental age of six to six and one-half years is essential for success with certain types of first grade reading programs, but these data are to be interpreted statistically, for the figures quoted were measures of central tendency and it becomes necessary to view individual variations above and below the figures stated through a study of the dispersion.

In general, children located in the front of the classroom excel those located in the rear of the classroom.

Retardation in reading blocks general educational progress. The desirable enrichment of the elementary school program has placed a still higher premium on reading ability, while investigations have shown that about 80 to 90 per cent of all study activities at the high school level require reading.

Reversals account for only 10 per cent of the reading difficulties of retarded pupils and these errors decrease with an increase in maturity. Heretofore, investigators have overemphasized the tendency of retarded readers to reverse and to confuse word forms as a factor in specific reading disability.

All pupils at both the elementary and high school levels can profit from systematic instruction in reading. And, it has been demonstrated that certain types of systematic instruction produce greater gains in academic achievement than cer-

tain types of so-called opportunistic instruction.

"Good" readers excel "poor" readers in visual perception, purposefulness, and rhythm of eye movements. No one correlate or symptom can be used to account for all reading difficulties, because each case appears to offer a constellation of individual difficulties and many types of compensation.

School failures vary according to certain administrative policies of promotion. Double standards of promotion operate when children are admitted to first grade on the basis of chronological age and promoted to second grade on the basis of reading achievement. It behooves those who cry for standardization to at least base their thinking on less fallible principles and assumptions.

School failures have been reduced substantially when each group of children in each classroom has been provided with systematic instruction differentiated in terms of rates of maturation. Among many other significant items, "goose step" regimentation which requires a class to struggle through pre-primers, primers, and first readers at the same time is undoubtedly responsible for the retardation of a significant number of clinic cases. A system of instruction which uses the average to pace the rate of growth for the fast and for the slow is fairly certain to result in retardation in terms of individual capacities to achieve.

Training in logical organizations (such as outlining and summarizing) and in reading for details improves depth of comprehension but retards the rate of reading, while practice in skimming and reading for general impression increases the rate but decreases the depth of comprehension. From this, it is clear that a balanced program of reading is needed.

For developmental or directed reading activities the following statements appear to be pertinent: (1) Reading comprehen-

sion can be improved by establishing purposes *before* the reading. (2) Vocabulary development exercises are most effective when following the silent reading in which difficulties with word perception and word meanings are identified. (3) A purposeful re-reading is more fruitful than making marginal notes and underscoring important passages during the first reading.

Rate of reading is closely related to the speed of association of ideas.

Although not used by rapid readers, lip movements do not influence power of comprehension and they decrease from grade to grade.

Within the mental capacity of the learner, reading deficiencies can be removed by well motivated first-teaching procedures. The development of procedures peculiar to remedial reading is, for the most part, yet to be realized. It has been demonstrated that a substantial proportion of retarded readers can be adequately helped by the use of differentiated classroom activities.

Change of learner attitude appears to be one of the first steps in remedial reading because most investigations of retardation have brought to light deep-seated emotional complexes and inadequate concepts of the reading process. Reading fear and tenseness, an attitude of withdrawal or of rebellion, timidity, a rationalized dislike for school activities requiring reading, self-consciousness, compensation by unusual achievement in other school activities, and other emotional aberrations have been reduced simultaneously when the child has learned to read for meaning. The attitudes of parents, child, and teacher usually must be considered in the development of a wholesome emotional situation in which gaps are bridged and learning is re-directed so that practice on errors is avoided. Although inadequate emotional responses are quite generally believed to

be symptoms rather than causes of retardation in reading, there is the implication that such factors should be weighed in the diagnosis and the correction of the difficulty.

Reading is essentially a thinking process involving the language functions, but certain peripheral and perceptual aspects of vision are worthy of consideration. Reports on the incidence of visual difficulties and ocular anomalies among retarded readers show a variation from 30 to 87 per cent. Dr. Brant Clark recently has reported that subjects with esophoria and exophoria require more time to complete abductive movements at the beginning of the line than orthophoric subjects require. In any event, every child has the right to comfortable one or two-eyed vision for sustained efforts, and the correction of visual aberrations must be followed by systematic reading instruction.

Faulty eye movements are only symptoms but it is important that beginners be helped to form rhythmical left-to-right progression and accurate return sweeps.

Data relative to the relationship between hemispherical dominance or confusion of dominance are still inconclusive. It is somewhat generally conceded, however, that the emotional situation incident to the changing of a child's hand preference is a factor worth study. Confusions of acquired and congenital "word-blindness" are scattered generously throughout the literature of the subject.

The mere memorization of words or word elements in isolation contributes little to thoughtful and rhythmical reading.

One of the chief limitations of standardized tests for remedial work is their inadequacy for the measurement of small increments of growth.

The use of manuscript writing as a part of the primary program can be justified on the basis of speed, legibility, and contribution to reading achievement.

Although it is quite generally agreed

that from fifteen to twenty-five foot candles of light are desirable for close work, surveys show that many children are working in one to four foot candles of light.

### *Summary*

A few pioneer studies have been made of a large number of areas, but recent data on old problems and the identification of unexplored areas point to more fruitful research in the near future. In general, the following summarizing statements appear to be valid:

(1) Interpretation of research findings is limited by many items including variations in the definition of retardation in reading, variations of concepts underlying the terminology used in reports, increasing number of areas under investigation, preparation of investigators for specialized research, and inadequacy of research techniques.

(2) There is accumulating evidence that we are approaching an era when researches will be co-ordinated so that integrated pictures of maturation rhythms can be made.

(3) In the future emphasis on adequate first-teaching and maintenance procedures probably will reduce remedial reading to a position of less importance than it now holds in the learning program.

(4) There is increasing evidence that possible symptoms, correlates and causes should be investigated by co-operative efforts of students with recognized scholarship in the areas involved.

(5) In the typical public school system is an alarming need for systematic instruction in terms of differentiated requirements. As a corollary, the concepts of dispersion rather than central tendency demand practical interpretation by administrators, supervisors, and teachers.

(6) Since pedagogical difficulties of cases with reading deficiencies are emphasized by respected investigators, it ap-

pears that the preparation of teachers for the obligations which they assume should be reviewed and investigated. In a recent survey of teachers in primary and rural schools, the writer found that only 16 per cent had ever been prepared by a course in primary reading. Teachers at the junior and senior high school levels have been at the point of being almost boastful of the fact that they have not had a professional course on problems related to reading and study. Although the materials of instruction will ever be improved, it is at once apparent that materials now avail-

able at both the elementary and secondary school levels point to the fact that instruction should not be withheld because of such a lack. A drive on a program of systematic instruction in reading and study for all students of both elementary and secondary schools can be justified. In order to meet this need, it is obvious that the pre-service and in-service preparation of teachers must receive major consideration if the problems are to be adequately identified, defined, evaluated, and perhaps solved in terms of the capacities of the learners.

### SIMPLIFICATION OF VOCABULARY

(Continued from page 124)

stitutions necessitated a divergence from standard English usage, making the language cumbersome at times.

(5) There were instances wherein other elements were made more difficult by necessarily replacing a single word with a phrase or a group of words.

(6) There were times when the substitution of less difficult words for difficult words definitely aided pupils in understanding the material read.

(7) Staying within the limits of Thorndike's first 2500 words (recommended as being suitable for the fourth grade) did not, in the main, facilitate understanding at the sixth-grade level.

(8) The pictorial tests and personal interviews revealed numerous vocabulary difficulties and erroneous concepts which were most frequent among pupils in the lower percentiles.

(9) Pictorial tests and personal interviews disclosed confusions that were caused by certain words and phrases having several possible connotations.

### *Conclusion*

Results from this investigation indicate

that, keeping other elements constant, the simplification of vocabulary does not materially facilitate pupils' understanding of material read. Only in a limited number of instances did the substitution of known words for unknown words aid pupils' comprehension. On the other hand, there were times when other structural elements were made more difficult.

The importance of vocabulary in producing a readable style should not be minimized by the results of this study. Investigators are well agreed that vocabulary is an important, if not the most important, index of difficulty. But the consequent tendency to simplify the vocabulary by using a master word list based upon mechanical word counts or a word list of extremely narrow limits is insufficient in itself to make material more readable. Other structural elements which affect comprehension in reading must be taken into account. And in addition to these elements, the inherent difficulty of the concepts and the relation of the pupils' experiences to the ideas presented are exceedingly important factors to comprehension.



# The Status and Improvement of Student Teachers in Reading

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HOW WELL do student teachers read? How well do they speak and write in the English language? How well should they perform in these fields if they are to be teachers? Speaking more specifically, how well should they read, speak, and write in English if they are to teach in the elementary schools of our country?

These and other vexatious questions about the status and improvement of college freshmen in reading and English are troubling educators concerned with problems of teacher preparation today. Members of faculties in teacher-training institutions are cognizant of the fact that many of the freshmen coming to them for instruction and guidance will need to learn to read more intelligently and to speak and write more intelligibly than they do upon entrance to college, if they are to be considered somewhat capable of teaching in the elementary schools upon graduation.

Evidence could be produced to show that many pupils in the elementary grades have ability to read, speak, and write English beyond that of the average college freshman entering certain teacher-training institutions. The lack of preparedness upon the part of these college freshmen obligates the schools of their choice to offer them special work in college reading and English, if they are to be sent out as well-prepared teachers—teachers who can guide capable children, even in the elementary school.

The problem of making up for this unpreparedness in reading and English on the part of many college entrants is a difficult one to solve in all teacher-training institutions, but it is especially so in the schools which still offer one- and two-year courses. No matter how difficult, the problem is crucial and must be solved. It devolves upon all teacher-training institutions to offer concentrated remedial work and drill to students below the norms for college freshmen—and, furthermore, to offer that training early in the freshman year. If this supplementary training be given early enough, some time will remain, even in the freshman year, for application and utilization of the skills and techniques stressed. There is time for what may be termed "seasoning in reading, and in the use of the English language in speaking and writing."

In many teacher-training institutions, efforts are being made to measure the status of freshmen in reading and English upon entrance to college, in an effort to see that the freshmen poorly prepared in the given subjects may be given special training. After the additional work in reading and English has been completed, the freshmen in the remedial groups are tested again. Records of status taken at the beginning of the year are compared with records taken at the end of the year in order to determine what specific gains may have been made. The usual steps—pre-testing, teaching, and final testing—are followed in most schools offering a

program of supplementary work.

The records on status and improvement for a given group of freshmen from one teacher-training institution follow. They may yield direct indications of the need for such a program of testing and teaching, and of the possible effectiveness of such a program. By implications and inference (after a study has been made of the returns) it will probably occur to the reader to question whether there are not many teacher-training programs in colleges today which could be improved by including in them supplementary training similar to that offered in the school cited.

At the beginning of the school year (1934-1935), a program of entrance tests was administered to all freshmen entering the teacher-training curricula offered at Eastern State Normal School, Madison, South Dakota. The tests given included the Otis Self-Administering Tests of Mental Ability, Form A; the Iowa Comprehension Tests, Series D1; and the Iowa Placement Examinations of English-Training Form A.

The various tests were given by the instructors in psychology, English, and reading, respectively. The remedial work in English was placed under the direction of the head of the department of English; that in reading was placed under the direction of the college instructor of techniques in reading.

The students ranking lowest in English were given extra help in a remedial section; the others received some individual guidance in the regular classes in composition.

In an effort to help students who were below the norm in reading, several evening classes were offered for the benefit of those who could attend. Although these classes in reading were not compulsory, all but five of the students falling below the norm of 22 (the norm for college freshmen on Form D1 of the Iowa Comprehension Tests) availed themselves of

the opportunity of taking supplementary training.

In the spring of 1935, second forms of the achievement tests used in the fall were given. They were the Iowa Comprehension Test, Series D2; the Iowa Placement Examinations of English-Training, Form X; and the Otis Self-Administering Tests of Mental Ability.

Ordinarily, Form A of the Iowa Placement Examination should have been followed by Form B. However, for administrative reasons, the more desirable sequence was not followed. The returns are nevertheless meaningful in a comparative way if possible scores and norms for the two forms of the test are held in mind by the interpreter.

The returns from the pre-testing program were studied by members of the staff in their attempt to build a supplementary program of training in reading and English based upon actual needs as revealed by the testing returns.

The quite general need for supplementary training in reading and English was indicated by the measures of central tendency given in Table 1.

TABLE 1  
GENERALIZED DATA FROM TESTING RETURNS  
FALL, 1934

Tests	Total Cases		Range		Medians	Norms
	Cases below	of	Norms	Scores		
Otis Intelligence Form A	83	1	130-88	109.98	90-110	
Iowa Comprehension Form D1	83	45	33-8	20.64	22	
Iowa Placement English-Training Form A	40	40	21-8	15.15	22	
Iowa Placement English-Training Form A	83	46	158-28	87.85	94	

In Table 2 appear the same type of returns for the identical cases on the tests

given in the spring of 1935. These returns indicate the general fact that gains in ability to read and to use English had been made for many students in the group.

TABLE 2  
GENERALIZED DATA FROM TESTING RETURNS  
SPRING, 1935

	Total Cases		Range	Medians	Norms
	Cases below		of		
	Norms		Scores		
Iowa					
Comprehension Form D2	40	33	32-15	22.5	27
Iowa					
Placement					
English-Training Form X	83	36	186-32	119.95	104

Measures of central tendency are not the key measures to be studied by those interested in improving a group of students in ability to read and in ability to use good English. The scores for the individuals falling below the accepted norm were those to be scrutinized. After discovering which of the students needed help, the problem was to discover the types of help needed. The returns made on the standardized tests used were studied somewhat diagnostically to this end. In the light of the results of this study, the students were given special help in English by their instructors in English, and special help in reading by their instructors in techniques of reading.

At the beginning of the school year (1934-1935), it was evident that all of the eighty-three students in the group chosen for this study at Eastern State Normal School were normal or above in intelligence save one. That student was rated as having an I.Q. of 88. The thesis that all should have been capable of learning to read can surely be accepted on the basis of this evidence in regard to intelligence.

But, were they all up to the norm for college freshmen in ability to read? No. Forty-five out of the total of eighty-three fell below the norm for college freshmen on Form D1 of the Iowa Comprehension Test. All of these students falling below the norm, save five, took the supplementary training in reading offered them. By the end of the year, all had made gains; but thirty-three were still below the norm for freshmen on Form D2 of the Iowa Comprehension Test. The class median in the fall had been 20.64 for the eighty-three students as compared with the norm of 22. The class median in the fall had been 15.15 for the forty students who had gone into training. In the spring, the class median for the forty students who had taken training was 22.5, as compared with the norm of 27 for college freshmen.

On the Iowa Placement Examinations of English-Training, Form A, given in the fall, forty-six out of eighty-three of the freshmen tested were below the norm. On Form X of the same test, given in the spring, twenty-six out of eighty-three were below the norm. All students, save six, had gained points from test to test. The class median on the test given in the fall was 87.85, as compared with the norm of 94; the class median on the test given in the spring was 119.98 as compared with the norm of 106.

The positive picture of status which confronts one in studying the pre-test and final test scores is one which shows that, on the Iowa Comprehension Test, twenty-eight of the freshmen tested were at or above the norm for college freshmen at the beginning of the year, forty-six were at or above the norm by the end of the year; and that, on the Iowa Placement Examinations of English-Training, twenty-seven were at or above the norm for college freshmen at the beginning of the year, and fifty-seven were at or above the norm at the end of the year.

What gains can be claimed under the program followed at the given school?

In general, it may be claimed that the small, informal program of supplementary training helped bring about some needed gains. It did not, however, bring about all the gains desirable, or even necessary, in courses of training designed to prepare teachers for the elementary schools. Too many students were still below the norms for college freshmen in reading and English, after they had completed their courses in composition and reading.

At least a small gain was made by almost every freshman at the given school in both reading and English, as measured by the tests used. The short intensive program had been worth while as a means of improving status. More could have been accomplished in a well-worked out program extending over four years of college training, preceded by the same type of intensive program used.

In attempting to summarize facts brought out in regard to status and improvement of certain college freshmen in reading and the allied subject of English, one finds that the following points stand out clearly:

The status of ability in reading, as measured by the Iowa Comprehension Test, at the beginning of the year, was at or above normal for twenty-eight out of the eighty-three freshmen. The status at the end of the year was at or above normal for forty-six out of eighty-three.

The status of ability in English, as measured by the Iowa Placement Examinations, at the beginning of the year, was at or above normal for twenty-seven out of the eighty-three freshmen. The status at the end of the year was at or above normal for fifty-seven out of eighty-three.

In general, it may be claimed that the program of supplementary and remedial training for freshmen\* carried on at Eastern State Normal School, in 1934-1935,

brought about the following results: The status of ability in reading, as measured by the Iowa Comprehension Test, was improved for forty of the freshmen under the plan. The status of ability in English, as measured by the Iowa Placement Examinations of English-Training, was improved for seventy-seven of the freshmen under the plan. These freshmen who improved were, undoubtedly, made more capable of carrying on their work in college as a result of the supplementary training received. The institution was aroused to an awareness of an added responsibility in its program of teacher preparation—that of bringing all freshmen who are to enter upon teacher training up to accepted college freshman norms in reading and English. On-coming students should benefit from that institutional awareness.

The program used at Eastern State Normal School was largely remedial in nature. It was needed then, is still needed, and will be needed for the large majority of freshmen until standards of training in the state may be raised to a minimum of four years of college training for all teachers. Less remedial and supplementary teaching in tool subjects will be needed by the teacher-training institution when it may send out as teachers only those students who have successfully completed a four-year course of college training.

What can be done to bring about a better general condition of status in ability in reading and English? The first answer to that question would probably be, require that students certified to teach have a four-year college course in teacher training as a minimum. The second answer would, undoubtedly, be, teach college students to read intelligently and to speak and write intelligibly in all fields of their study. There are additional answers, such as better programs of first teaching in the elementary and secondary schools, and a



more truly functional program of freshman English in college; but the first two given are basic to these. The two first mentioned may be considered beginning points in *agenda* lists for teacher-training institutions desirous of improving the status of teachers in the science and art of reading, speaking, and writing the English language. Great would be the benefits to elementary grade pupils taught by teachers sent out well-prepared by institutions zealous in their attack upon these basic problems!

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## CERTAIN MATTERS OF IMPORTANCE

(Continued from page 118)

others<sup>10</sup> shows that verbalism in reading is widespread at different educational levels. Among other things children are able to give the correct "answers" without having the understanding that the answers represent. When asked oral questions or when given written objective tests pertaining to their comprehension of material read, these pupils and students are

able to speak or write the words which stand for meaning that they do not realize in the reading. Obviously, this constitutes a serious challenge to the means that are commonly used for checking or measuring comprehension in reading. Apparently, more valid tools must be employed for this purpose. This is essential if the learner is to realize that in all reading emphasis is to be thrown upon the achievement of meaning.

<sup>10</sup> See *The Teaching of Reading: A Second Report*. *Op. cit.* Ch. IX.

## WHAT BEGINNING READERS READ

(Continued from page 128)

It is not hard to understand why children repeatedly ask for stories with rapid dramatic action, stories made up of episode after episode rising to a swift climax, such as Bremen Town Musicians and Chicken Little.

Cannot attractive stories containing this charm of style, this unity of incident be written in such simplified vocabulary that children may read them with the same thrill with which they listen to a story?

In summarizing, may we urge that a more balanced program be planned for the initial reading period. As surely as we inject into the child's reading program informational experiential material, so must we balance it with stories that create a desire for reading because of the joy in them—a taste of "The Little Red Hen" with the "spinach."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This allusion is taken from an article entitled "Spinach and the Little Red Hen" by Margaret McLaughlin, appearing in *THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW* November, 1934.

## PSYCHOLOGY IN THE READING CLINIC

(Continued from page 137)

16. The typography should be selected in accord with the needs of the children at various levels of ability.

17. Lighting standards should be understood; Betts<sup>12</sup> says that "fifteen to twenty-five foot candles of light, with the least possible amount of glare are minimum lighting standards for close work by children."

18. Confidence, enthusiasm, motive should be given to the learner. A "reading conscience" and a "reading consciousness" should be developed.

19. The remedial program should be so described and understood that children will think it a privilege to have the opportunity to learn to read better.

<sup>12</sup> Betts, Emmett A., *Op. Cit.*, p. 172.

## A READING PROGRAM

(Continued from page 140)

The great problem in securing appropriate material is due to the heavy vocabulary burden and complexity of sentence structure in most of the available material. The pupils find difficulty in understanding sentences beginning with qualifying phrases, those using parenthetical expressions, and those containing several prepositions. In paragraphs where many pronouns are used, the pupils are apt to become confused and "bogged" down in unravelling the meaning. Figurative language, and words expressing mood and emotion multiply the confusion. The instructor must be aware of

these difficulties and utilize class discussion, explanations, application to other situations, and further reading as aids in clarification of meaning.

In conclusion, when planning a program of reading for Spanish speaking pupils, all of the techniques should be utilized which are ordinarily employed in a good reading program for English-speaking pupils. To these must be added the techniques herein suggested to aid them in acquiring an English speaking and reading vocabulary, and maintaining it in an environment which makes little demand for its use.

# Editorial

## Reconnaissance and Advance

**D**R. ROBERT M. HUTCHINS, President of the University of Chicago, in an address before the Maryland State Teachers Association last fall, drew a distinction of considerable interest to teachers of reading. There are, he said, "two classes of students for whom we have never made provision, those who could not read and those who were not interested in reading."

The second group can read, but do not turn to reading for recreation. With them there is no question of handicaps; there is only a question of choice. We English teachers and librarians, who are disposed to regard reading as a universal means to the pursuit of happiness, probably worry too much about this group of non-readers. Dr. Hutchins believes that we are inclined to harry these people until they form a distaste for school. The more sensible course for us would probably be to do our best to teach such pupils to read, and then send them cheerfully along to spend their leisure in tinkering with engines, or playing ball. *De gustibus non est disputandum.*

With the first group, however, the functionally illiterate, many zealous educational workers have concerned themselves, as this number of THE REVIEW attests. The size and distribution of this group will come as something of a shock to those who have not been working at the problem. Both Fitzgerald and Betts state that reading disabilities occur among children of normal and superior intelligence more frequently than among dullards. And it is humiliating to realize that twelve years of schooling are not sufficient to discover and correct reading handicaps, so that entrants to at least one

normal school numbered so many sub-standard readers as to necessitate remedial work at the college level! (See Miss Garnett's paper.)

But the numbers both of the functionally illiterate, and the willfully illiterate should be reduced by the research and the remedial work that is being done, and above all, by the clear-sighted, common-sense viewpoint of the leaders who are directing the work. It is significant that most of the articles in this issue of THE REVIEW show a discontent with classroom methods and materials, and with the interpretation of research. Miss Pratt and Miss Meighen object to the exclusive use of factual material in readers. McKee insists that "the quality and the quantity of the *meaning* which the individual realizes when he comes in contact with printed symbols of ideas" is the fundamental measure of reading effectiveness. Betts deplores the dilettantism evident in much of the so-called "research" in reading handicaps. And, through a carefully conducted and extensive experiment, Nolte has found that simplification of vocabulary makes no appreciable difference in reading comprehension—a truly sensational and magnificent piece of debunking!

It is evident that the contributors to this issue have their feet firmly on the ground, and view the progress made thus far toward a more effective teaching of reading with unprejudiced and appraising eyes. Their attitude may be expressed in a paraphrase of Dr. Fitzgerald's statement concerning diagnosis: effective teaching of reading "is not a static thing, it is dynamic; it is not a perfect thing, it is an improving, unfolding procedure."

# Reviews and Abstracts

**Reading for Skill**, Practice Exercises for Remedial Reading and Library Skill, by Angela M. Broening, Frederick H. Law, Mary S. Wilkinson, and Caroline L. Ziegler, Noble and Noble, 1936. 399 pages.

We have had standard reading tests and scales for twenty years. We have had diagnostic tests of reading ability for ten years. Since the introduction of these tests into the schools their use has revealed a wide variation in reading ability in every grade from the first through the twelfth, and even in the early years of college.

The increased enrollment in the senior high school in recent years has, as these tests show, crowded into the upper grades a large number of bright non-clerical-minded children who are poor readers, along with a considerable number of slow children who are poor readers for no other reason than that they are generally slow. This increase in enrollment has intensified the problem, long present, of teaching pupils in the secondary schools to read. However, in spite of all the tests, and much testing, teachers have been left largely to their own ingenuity to devise remedial measures and to find suitable materials for developing the skills found to be deficient. The need—in many cases, a desperate need—for remedial material for use in junior and senior high schools is now adequately met for the first time, and within the covers of one book, *Reading for Skill*.

The abilities chosen by the authors of *Reading for Skill* for analysis and development are the abilities common sense would indicate are important. In addition, these abilities include all abilities measured by the best diagnostic reading tests.

*Reading for Skill* contains a diagnostic pre-test divided into nine parts, each measuring one of the major abilities deemed important enough for inclusion, together with a final test of similar structure and content. For each ability tested, there is a carefully graded set of practice exercises, followed by check tests to reveal when the skill gained by the use of the practice exercises is adequate.

Generally speaking, the abilities are arranged in order of importance, the more important first, and, in so far as consistent with the first principle, in an ascending order of difficulty. For example, skill in "discovering the central idea" is perhaps the most important single reading skill for the pupil to acquire. This skill, then, should be the first one emphasized; and it is (pp. 33-79). On the other hand, the last set of exercises in the book is devoted to "finding appropriate reading material in libraries"

(pp. 271-322). This ability, always important for the independent student and increasingly necessary for every adult who wishes to save time when using a library, is properly placed last.

It is hard to resist the temptation to list all the abilities dealt with in this book and to comment on each, but space will not permit. However, three especially fine sections must be noticed, namely: (1) outlining, and (2) precis-writing, both presented as methods of comprehending and remembering what is read, and (3) "recognizing sense-appealing words and apt comparisons," as a way to insight and enjoyment.

The exercises set up to develop each ability are arranged in order of increasing difficulty. For example, the first exercises (pp. 35-37) under the heading of "reading to discover the central idea" are very easy, probably requiring no more than average fourth grade ability. The last exercises under the same heading (pp. 76-79) are difficult enough to challenge the ability of the average college freshman.

The literary selections chosen for the exercises cover an exceedingly wide range of subject-matter and pupils' interests. Here is material suitable for the development of all the reading abilities required in each and every one of the subjects taught in the secondary school. Some of the selections are from classical sources, and others from contemporary books, newspapers, and magazines. Only a few are common-place. The vast majority are challenging to the interest of young and old alike. Sage wisdom and sparkling humor mingle with each other as they do in life.

The pupils' edition of the book is bound in black water-proof cloth, printed in red. The teachers' edition is in dark blue, printed in light blue. When either edition is stood on the table with other books used in the English classes of the junior and senior high schools, pupils and teachers alike invariably reach for a copy of *Reading for Skill*. And they usually like what is inside even better than they do the cover.

A few weeks' use of the book in ten schools in Cleveland indicates that children like it best, and make most gain in proportion to the effort expended, when they work with the material two or three days a week. These practice periods may be set up either as part of the regular work or as extra work assigned to specific pupils because of their known difficulties in reading.

The material is suitable for remedial work with children of the mental age of twelve years, and up. Surprisingly good results have been obtained with



ninth grade pupils with I.Q.'s of 80-90. In such a class, the teacher in charge must, as the group takes up each new skill, make some explanation to the class as a whole and permit enough oral discussion to make sure that everyone understands thoroughly the method of reading required. Even older and more intelligent pupils profit from such oral discussion of their silent reading. However, most of these abler pupils can succeed with *Reading for Skill* by individual interpretation and self-drill.

The intelligent reader, young or old, even though he has small interest in remedial work in reading, will, if he picks up a copy of *Reading for Skill*, find himself trying the tests and chuckling over the wit and wisdom of the material, and perhaps a bit at the insight he gains into some of his own careless reading habits. In fact, these insights frequently prove to be as valuable to the student as the formal diagnosis and remedial work.

*Reading for Skill* is the result of long and painstaking scientific work. However, the whole book is done with creative imagination and dynamic power—qualities unfortunately rare in scientific work in education.

—Wm. L. Connor  
 Superintendent of Schools  
 Allentown, Pennsylvania  
 Formerly Chief, Bureau of Educational  
 Research, Cleveland, Ohio

**Happy Hour Readers.** By Mildred English and Thomas Alexander. Illus. by Rhoda Chase, Margaret Freeman, Marjorie Hartwell, and Samuel B. Wiley. Johnson Publishing Company, 1935.

The Happy Hour series include the pre-primer *Spot*; *Jo-boy*, the primer; *Good Friends* for the first grade; *Wheels and Wings* for the second grade, and *Wide Windows* for grade three, with teacher's editions and work books to cover each.

The name "Happy Hour Readers" is, in itself, symbolic of the content of the series. Fun, humor, and joyous living are emphasized with content material so interwoven as to be almost incidental. Many a serious thing is said in a joke and so it is with the "Happy Hour Readers," for much social and natural science as well as literary material is introduced through the medium of fun. Some of the humor is obtained by the personification of animals or inanimate objects, but in such a way as not to confuse the realistic with the fanciful. With all the little tricks and jokes related in these stories, kindness, thoughtfulness, courtesy, and respect are exemplified.

The materials are fresh, interesting, varied, and in addition, are simple throughout; thus the child is able, while mastering the rudiments of reading, to enjoy the stories, leaving heavier content materials for supplementary reading, especially in the first

grade. In other words, "Happy Hour Readers" stimulate the imagination and make reading like a game, without losing sight of the ends to be accomplished.

In addition to the unusual fanciful stories, which lend enchantment and contribute much to the fun and humor of the series, there are stories pertaining to pets, home and community life, helpers, interdependence of city and country, sources of food and clothing, shelter, social and natural sciences, transportation, peoples of other lands, recreation and right relationships. Various phases of these subjects are introduced and although not developed as extensively as might be desired, they serve as an introduction for activity units and more intensive study. Oral, silent, work, and recreational types of reading are provided for, and thoughtful reading attitudes and permanent reading interests promoted. Poetry, on the child's level to interpret and appreciate, has not been overlooked in this series. Many of these delightful stories and poems were contributed by well known modern authors of children's literature.

A vocabulary, carefully and scientifically controlled as to number of words, their distribution, repetition and quality, has been utilized throughout the series and so organized that the child with but a few reading words can read with pleasure and enjoyment, for the purpose of obtaining meaning from the printed page. The introduction of new words per page is low, and the repetition high, making for ease and mastery in reading. Sentences are limited to one line only until the latter part of the primer and there are no broken phrases in the first grade books. Lines increase from shorter to longer lengths as the child advances from reading sentence units to thought units. The length of the units is adapted to the interest span of the children for whom the work is intended. The separate units are tied together by one central theme. The realistic style and naturalness of expression make for ease and fluency in reading.

The teacher's editions, four in number, include the complete text of the readers together with teacher's guides, which offer full direction for their use. They offer suggestions for supplementary work, the development of activity units, remedial instruction for various types of disabilities and references for further study.

The beautiful, four colored illustrations are life-like and full of action. Frequently they have a bit of the fun element injected in them to captivate the children's interest. They carry the plot of the story and help a child to interpret such phases as his ability does not enable him to read, thus providing visual aids for recognizing words.

The four work books which accompany the "Happy Hour Readers" are unique in that they present entirely new story plots thus providing the

child with additional easy reading material. Ample, clear cut action pictures support these stories. One of the commendable features of these books is the substitution of other procedures for the great amount of cutting and pasting required heretofore. The cutting and pasting included lends variety and is of large units thus avoiding the handling of small and intricate pieces.

The work books provide for the development of accuracy in independent word recognition through the aid of the dictionary pages. Informal testing devices are also provided.

—Audrey Courtier  
Chicago, Illinois

**Guidance in Reading Series.** By Grace E. Storm. Lyons and Carnahan, 1935.

Primary teachers will welcome the Guidance in Reading series prepared by Miss Grace E. Storm, Assistant Professor of Education at the University of Chicago. The series consists of the following books: (1) introductory primer, *Nip and Tuck*; (2) primer, *Bob and Judy*; (3) first reader, *Good Times Together*; (4) second reader, *Friends About Us*; (5) third reader, *Neighbors and Helpers*.

The content of the readers is unusually fresh, interesting, and varied. It is arranged in psychological order. The early stories, based on the delightful common experiences of children in the home and the immediate community, appeal strongly to children's play interests. Gradually stories dealing with the more remote communities are introduced. Through the variety of content the pupil's background is enriched, his environment is enlarged, and his training for the type of reading he must do in school subjects in subsequent grades is begun.

The readers furnish a wealth of material for the social studies. The material is allocated according to interest levels. For example, in the primer the unit on the farm gives a survey of the farm which acquaints the child with various animals. In the first reader the farm is treated as a source of the most common foods, such as vegetables, fruit, and honey. In the second reader the dairy farm is presented as a unit. In the third reader more specific types of farming are treated. Units are presented to acquaint the child with a turkey farm, a truck farm, a ranch, and an apiary.

The mechanical aspects of reading are thorough-

ly taken into account. All words are of high frequency in standard word lists. Excellent provision for immediate recall and frequent recurrence of words, without inane repetition, is a strong feature of the books. The vocabulary load is evenly distributed. In the introductory primer the maximum number of new words per page is two, while in each of the next three books the maximum is three.

There is a gradual increase in the number of lines of reading. In the introductory primer the maximum is only four lines.

Sentences are short. In the primer no sentence contains more than thirteen words; in the first reader, sixteen words; and in the second reader, twenty-three words.

The stories are grouped in reading units. Four pages is the maximum length of stories. The last story of each unit offers no new words or vocabulary difficulties. It re-uses at least eighty-five per cent of the new words of the unit.

Standards for the mechanical make-up of readers which have been established as the result of scientific research have been closely followed. Such matters as size and style of type, length of line, regularity of line length, width of margin, size of book, and kind of paper, are all highly satisfactory. The washable, binding with singer sewing and wire stitching will withstand hard usage.

Numerous attractive, colorful illustrations serve to interpret the text and to simplify reading difficulty.

Abundant teaching helps are available. They include a chart paralleling the first twenty pages of reading content in the primer; sentence cards for the first eighteen pages of the chart; and phrase and word cards for all except the last story in each unit for both the primer and first reader.

Well organized and carefully graded practice books provide educative seat work. Every word that appears in the text also appears in the practice books. The majority of the exercises are objective and are so arranged that the responses may be easily checked.

Teachers will appreciate the helpful manual with its lesson plans for each story, and its definite suggestions for differentiation of techniques for pupils of various levels of ability; for testing; and for remedial reading.

—Emma Reinhardt  
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Eastern Illinois State Teachers College  
Charleston, Illinois